

No. 5070

PUNCH, DECEMBER 26 1956

VOL. CCXXXI

Punch

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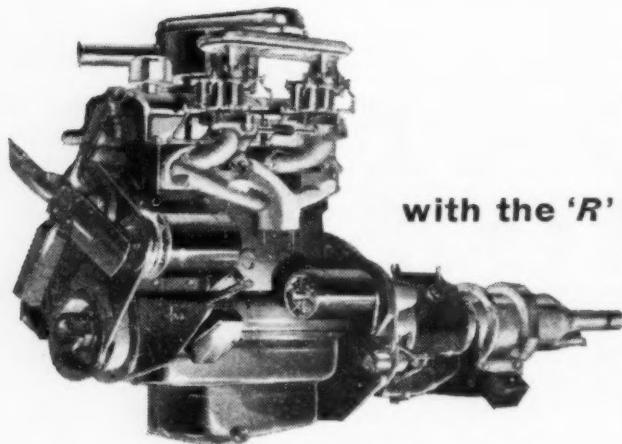
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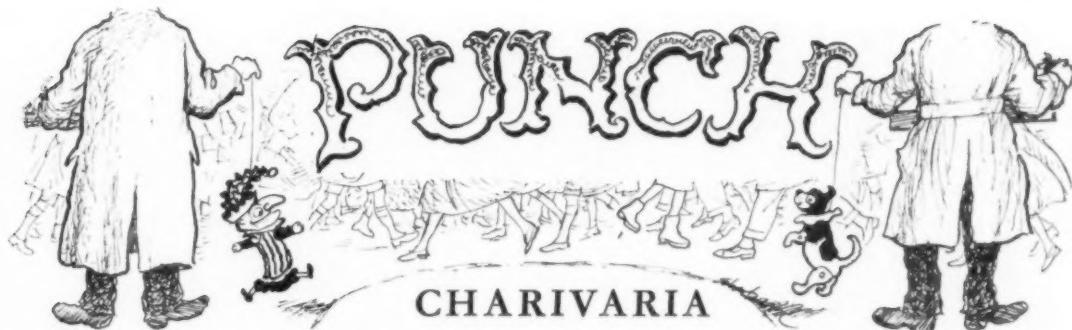
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DR. CHARLES HILL is likely to become active any day now in his new role of world propagandist for Britain; he could hardly have been expected to get around to this until his "Post Early for Christmas" campaign was behind him.

Nometallism

IN accordance with Government policy of "running down the strategic holdings of industrial raw materials,"



says a pronouncement from the Board of Trade, arrangements are to be made in the New Year for reducing the country's stocks of lead and zinc. If they go as well as the gold did everyone should be gratified.

Crackers

YESTERDAY's appeals, from studio and pulpit, for the spirit of Christmas to be carried into everyday life stirred only a few to the hope that this might be, and still fewer to the resolve to do something about it. But it is nice to think that there is somewhere on the other side of the world where it is always Christmas. The Ministry of Supply announce that arrangements are going briskly ahead for the forthcoming British nuclear tests on Christmas Island.

Petit Guignol

EVERYONE enjoys having the flesh made to creep, and it gave a pleasurable shock to read in the Stop Press the other day the ominous intelligence "JET FORCE LANDS"; but disappointing to

find on reading further that the jet force was a single Yugoslav fighter that had to put down in Italy through (of course) lack of petrol.

No Tired Business Men?

A THREE-WEEK "Festival of Women" is to be held next summer, it was announced at a recent Press conference in London presided over by the Duchess of Marlborough. The project, whose launching was backed by an enthusiastic message from the Chancellor of the Exchequer, is intended to be "an exhibition by women for women," and as such promises to be something entirely new.

Nobody Missing

IT was a dangerous move on the part of the Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra when they recently gave a polished performance of Schubert and Mozart without a conductor. Illusions are brittle, and repercussions will be felt in other than musical spheres. Newspaper



cuttings reporting the incident are already said to be arriving, marked "No comment," in the mail of many Ministers of the Crown.

Could Mean Bankruptcy

PARKING meters are now just round the corner, and some palliative legislation must surely be on the way for motorists who run out of petrol just as they round it.

"Bert's the one with the Grin"

OUR troops leaving Egypt, said a B.B.C. report, went aboard their ships in orderly silence "only cheering, waving

or singing to please Press photographers." This should put a stop to all that talk about thousands of our armed men having been put into Suez and brought out again with absolutely nothing to show for it.

Always an Angle

A GOOD deal of publicity has attended the Birmingham company director who is overcoming present difficulties by



going to work on a horse, but reports have not so far revealed how many times he has been stopped by men saying "Pssst!" and asking if he is all right for hay.

Open Book

OCCASION is sometimes given for criticism of the Central Office of Information planners, whose responsibility it is to arrange itineraries for foreign guests of this country. Little fault can be found with arrangements made for those members of the German Federal Parliament now here to study "aspects of youth organization." Their first three scheduled calls will be on a Surrey approved school, a Huntingdonshire Borstal Institution and the headquarters of the London Probation Service.

Kiss in the Ring

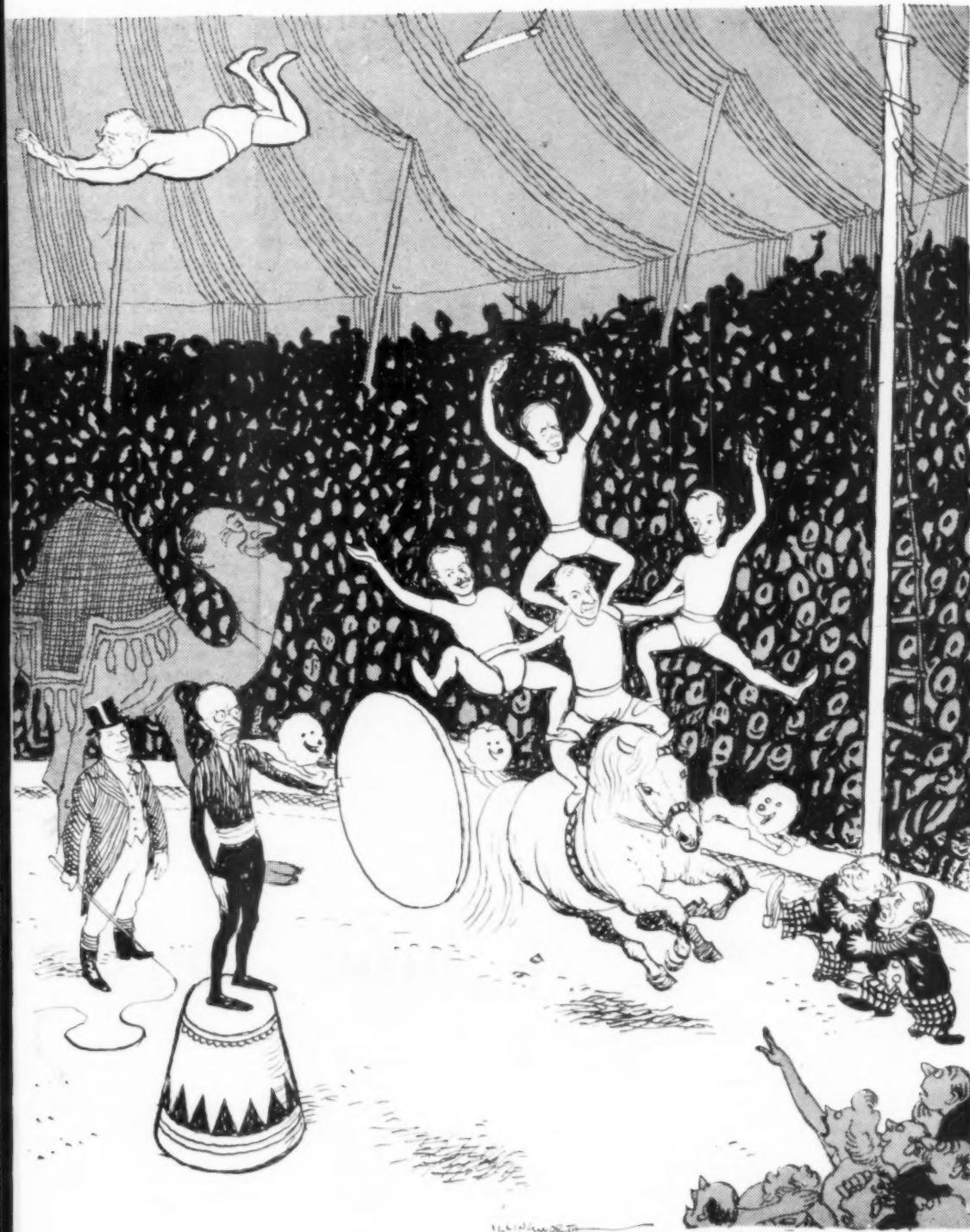
"Mr. Kiss has apparently been given the task of reorganising the Hungarian Communist Party."—*The Times*.

A COMMUNIST wooing is far, very far, From a gaily romantic affair. It isn't so much the Kiss of Kadar; There is also the hug of the Bear.



CONSERVATIVE

PUNCH, December 26 1956



CIRCUS



Another One Gone

By J. B. BOOTHROYD

IN richness and variety of incident 1956 may strike historians as unique. Families were gunned at their evening viewing, Singapore crowds cried "Freedom!" and threw bottles at Mr. Herbert Morrison, and Georgi Malenkov joined in song with the curator of Burns's birthplace. Three feet of hail fell on August 6. Washbrook came back. Newly stung by a French wasp, Liberace got three thousand Festival Hall music-lovers to stand up and cheer his mother. One day in spring the Irish Nationalists suitably stole *Jour d'Eté* from the Tate Gallery. Everyone but UN went to the Antarctic, and Sir Anthony and Lady Eden weekended in the London Clinic. Mr. Randolph Churchill dropped \$64,000 on American television but got some of it back by suing *The People*, and the ill-wind that swept General Glubb out of Jordan blew his wife into a job as guest critic for the *Evening Standard*.

Several indignities befell the British people, among them the expulsion of their Locust Control Organization from Saudi Arabia.

Certain items of news belied their early promise. One was the offer of \$15,000 by the Malayan Government for a national anthem; nothing more was heard of this, nor of reports that

Mr. Khrushchev and Mr. Bulganin were to bring a £1,000,000,000 interest-free loan in gold. The Canal Users' Association vanished at the height of its glory, and television camera units visiting Windlesham, where a farmer had announced that he would dynamite an intrusive electricity pylon, found that he now proposed to remove it by means of lawyers.

The Earl of Wharncliffe was chased by an ugly crowd gathered under the expectation that they were going to see Sabrina.

Hitler was officially pronounced dead.

By popular consent a Miss Nina Ponomareva was Sportswoman of the Year, and her delayed sailing from London in the *Vyacheslav Molotov* was marked by a present of a hat from the *Daily Sketch*. Other sporting news included the stoning of Worcester's centre-forward, threats to kill Keith Miller, the legalization of betting shops, Mr. Macmillan's Premium Bonds gambling scheme, and the smashing of fixtures and fittings in a train bringing back supporters from the Manchester-Everton match. Cock-fighting was revived on the Cheshire and Staffordshire border. As a natural result of an ability to place one foot before the other more quickly than most people Mr.

Roger Bannister and Mr. Christopher Chataway entered journalism at the top.

There was a Twins Drama.

Throughout the year the Government were tirelessly active, appointing Puisne Judges in British Guiana, removing the import duty from Mexican fibre or isle "not further dressed after scutching or decorticating," entertaining prominent Bolsheviks and raising the Bank Rate. On October 30 Mr. Duncan Sandys appealed to the nation to adopt the British Standards Institution's Code of Practice on Frost Precautions, and Port Said was bombed on the following day. Sir Brian Robertson, concerned because signalmen were sneaking off duty early and leaving trains to find their own way home, asked for another £23,000,000 for the railways. Among other demands were those seeking more for telephones, the London Zoo, coal, cinema seats, bread, milk, petrol and school-fees at Harrow. On the bright side, train-fares were reduced for dogs. The value of £100-worth of post-war credits was given officially as £62 10s.

Mr. Mintoff kept flying in.

The Press stoutly pursued its avowed ideal of promoting an informed public. Asked to keep secret the colour of Princess Margaret's bathing suit in Mauritius it fearlessly exposed it as pale blue. There were frank close-ups of the Queen Mother's sprained ankle. A photograph of the Heir to the Throne, a basket of fruit in the foreground, was captioned "Charles Spots the Grub," and full coverage was given to the Swiss kiss received by a Miss Sheffield from the Duke of Kent. Of other global events, headlines tell their own story: "I'm Divorcing Mike, says Liz" . . . "Rock 'n' Roll Boy Shoots Father Dead" . . . "Beer on Bert's Grave Shocks Vicar" . . . "Man with Hammer Attacks 4 at Tea" . . . "I Was Knifed to Tune of 'Cheating Heart,' Says Wife" . . . "Let's-Pretend Bride in Kiss of Death" . . . "Burglars Kill Roger, the Friendly Budgie." The ebb and flow of the capital punishment controversy enabled Sunday papers to do well with death-cell reminiscences and ex-hangmen's knot-by-knot memoirs. The Rev. David Sheppard attracted crowds of Fleet Street worshippers to St. Botolph's, Barton Seagrave, and dead old ladies of Eastbourne were allotted generous space. So was Guy

Burgess's mother. A London evening paper, self-acclaimed as First With the News, scooped all competitors with its series, "The Bible Was Right." *Rainbow*, ceasing publication, merged with *Tiny Tots*.

On the battlefields of the class war, U and non-U became inextricably interlocked; in another part of the arena the National Guild of Telephonists skirmished spiritedly with the T.U.C., resisting affiliation on the ground that it would mean "joining forces with corduroy-trouser workers."

Entertainment remained virile. Unmarried mothers in large numbers turned their backs on television audiences while experts debated their next move. In West Kensington, Soviet Army singers rendered "Tipperary." At Croydon, Ulanova danced Juliet. Early in the year Sir John Harding impressed with his series of airport interviews on Cyprus, but lost favour later. Ballet emerged as a political weapon, cinemas went cheap, many entertaining bouts were fought between B.B.C. and I.T.A. audience-research statisticians, the Dean of Canterbury lost his hat, and crowds were hosed out of places of entertainment for rocking and rolling. Records streamed from the gramophone studios in such confusion that a pressing of "Stars and Stripes" was broadcast instead of "The Marseillaise" on one of M. Mollet's arrivals at Heathrow.

On the cultural front, improving reading was provided by a stream of White House bulletins on Mr. Eisenhower's inside. There was also an Outsider. A British bookseller was found guilty of selling *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, and Folkestone police of both sexes launched a mass raid on comic

postcards. Mounting literacy among young Britons brought diaries back, and one fifteen-year-old wrote in his: "Day off. Go home and kill Mum and Dad, then take money." Another diary, said to be that of a General Grivas, was ascribed by some to Mr. Lennox-Boyd.

A Miss Monroe was here. A Mr. Coward was not. Other celebrities—that is, persons whom thousands would travel miles to see open a bazaar—included Porfirio Rubirosa, Miss Nancy Spain, Robin Hood, Colonel-General Serov, Mr. Menzies (*passim*), Mrs. Comer, Mr. Woodrow Wyatt, Jean Simmons's baby, any of the Messinas, and Group-Captain Townsend's brother.

Vogue-words on all lips included Enosis, Merdeka, Automation and Destalinization, though as the year closed these were being rapidly overhauled by Free Passage, Police Action, Power Vacuum, and Aubrey Jones.

It was a year in which some events prove difficult to classify. Cleethorpes appointed its own weather forecaster. The *Daily Worker* recommended readers to try a bottle of Tokay at 18s. President Nasser adopted the well-known Canal, but the announcement clashed in many papers with Dior's introduction of the six-inches-from-the-ground hemline. Durham miners struck after complaining of the quality of their free coal. Mau-Mau, 3D film systems and Sir Bernard Docker slipped quietly out of the news. Ireland slipped in. The Home Secretary said "There are no organized gangs in Soho."

Britain left Suez twice.

In ecclesiastical matters the Rev. Philip St. John Ross succeeded the Rev. Basil Andrews as Clergyman of the Year.

Oil by the Bbl

I LOATHE statistics; but the subject
being
The gooey gold dredged from the
desert soil,
I am made rather oddly happy seeing
Chaps writing "bbls" when com-
puting Oil.

Sing Christmas ecls,
 110° in the sun!
Roll out the bbls,
 We'll have a bbl of fun!

Say 20,000 bbls every minute
Is the potential of this oilfield A;
And B? At least 1,000,000 bbls in it;
But who's to get the bbls shipped
away?

Will bankers foot the tankers' bill?
It's whacking!

Where are Aladdin and his Forty
Thieves?

Why, hidden in the bbls, getting
cracking!

(This is the most engaging of
abbrevs!)

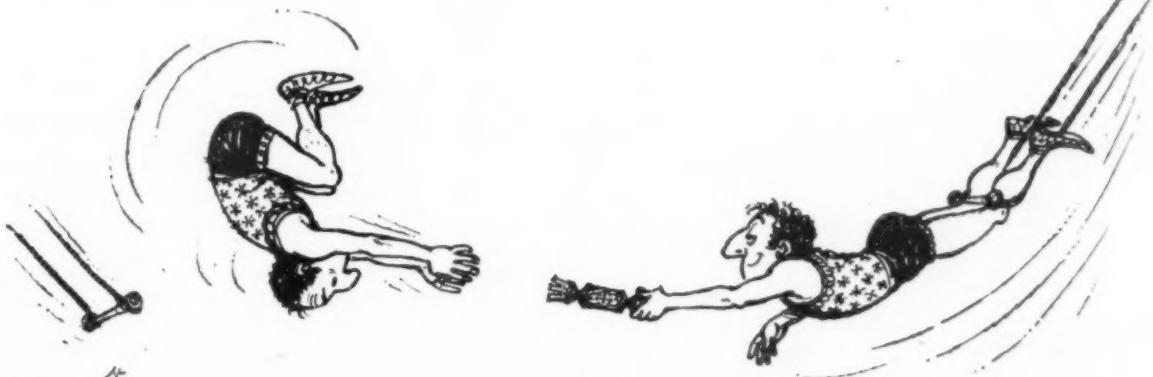
Did you begin the Rationing well
stocked up?

Logistics show we've simply got to
scrape

The bottom of the bbl. Suez blocked up,
The stuff must make the long trip
round the Cape.

Who's this appld
 In a funereal way?
Broker's man Macmillan (Hhld)
 And there's hell—to—pay!

RICHARD USBORNE



The Last of the Georgians: A Memoir

WITH the death of Hugh Pirbright Watson at the age of forty-four English poetry suffers a blow all the more severe in that it cannot at the moment be felt. This is because his genius for the Georgian poetic mode reached its full flower in a year (1929) when the mode had already temporarily become outmoded. He was still a schoolboy at Aquinas College when he wrote his last, loveliest and (dare I say it?) greatest poem—the final sonnet in a sequence of two, called *Pulchritudo*. I remember as though it were yesterday how he burst impulsively into the Masters' Common Room at mid-morning break—he must have run all the way from Lower Fourpenny—and laid it, so to speak, at my feet. It ran:

*The collied West was still. Beneath the wind
The blood-red æons, unforgetting,
moved
Where stand the chains that slay, the
swords that bind
The moated harbour that Achilles
loved;
Whose day invokes a more resplendent
hour,
Unceasing toil, the bravery of art,
Strong, knotted hands, the stupor of a
flower*

By PAUL DEHN

*That soothes the fleeted arrows of my
heart:
As when some dim, half-heard recessional
Stirs soundless circles in the wintry
bay
And old Silenus dances on the wall
And Juno crowns with wine our
holiday.
The bloom of autumn fades. Time's
acolyte
Sinks in the boundless ocean. It was
night.*

The sonnet was, of course, printed in Aquinas College's school-magazine, *The Thomist*—it later won the Sopwith Memorial Prize—and foolishly, as I now see, I persuaded him to submit it to *Cherwell* with which, having been the magazine's Oxford Union reporter in 1922, I still had a little pull. The undergraduate Editor—no doubt some smart-alecky anti-Romantic precisionist of the Robert Graves school—returned it to the boy with a letter which ended: "And what, may I ask in the name of practical strategy, would be the use of surrounding a harbour with a moat?"

Was it because of this single wounding rebuff (a battering-ram to kill a dragonfly!) that Hugh never wrote another line of poetry in his lifetime? Or

was it that the sensitive plant of his chosen poetic idiom could never have flourished outside the sheltered soil of the school he so loved?

The same issue of *The Thomist* contained his earlier poem, *Palamon*, which would have been a sonnet had not our then Headmaster, Canon Earnshaw, seen fit to excise the third quatrain for reasons I cannot now recall. It was dedicated

TO —
IN SPITE OF EVERYTHING
and ended:

*Say, must I fan that whimp'ring flame,
or beat
Love's crucible to dust beneath my
feet . . . ?*

Formative influences? I fed him assiduously on early Brooke:

*Ah! the long road! and you so far
away!
Oh! I'll remember! but . . . each
cravelling day
Will pale a little your scarlet lips, each
mile
Dull the dear pain of your remembered
face.*

I let him discover Housman—and shall not lightly forget how, after a joint canoeing holiday between La Charité and Cosne, he presented me with a little exercise-book labelled *A Loire Lad*, containing lyric verses, in his hero's style, on all the riparian towns and villages past which we had companionably paddled.

*By Chateauneuf and Jargau,
Where I was used to roam,
The boats take up their cargo
And turn again for home.*

*The boats take up their cargo
The windy Loire upon,
By Chateauneuf and Jargau,
And shall when I am gone.*

Then the Elizabethans hit him—a long association presaged by the sonnet, *Of Friendship—A Plaint*, which ended:

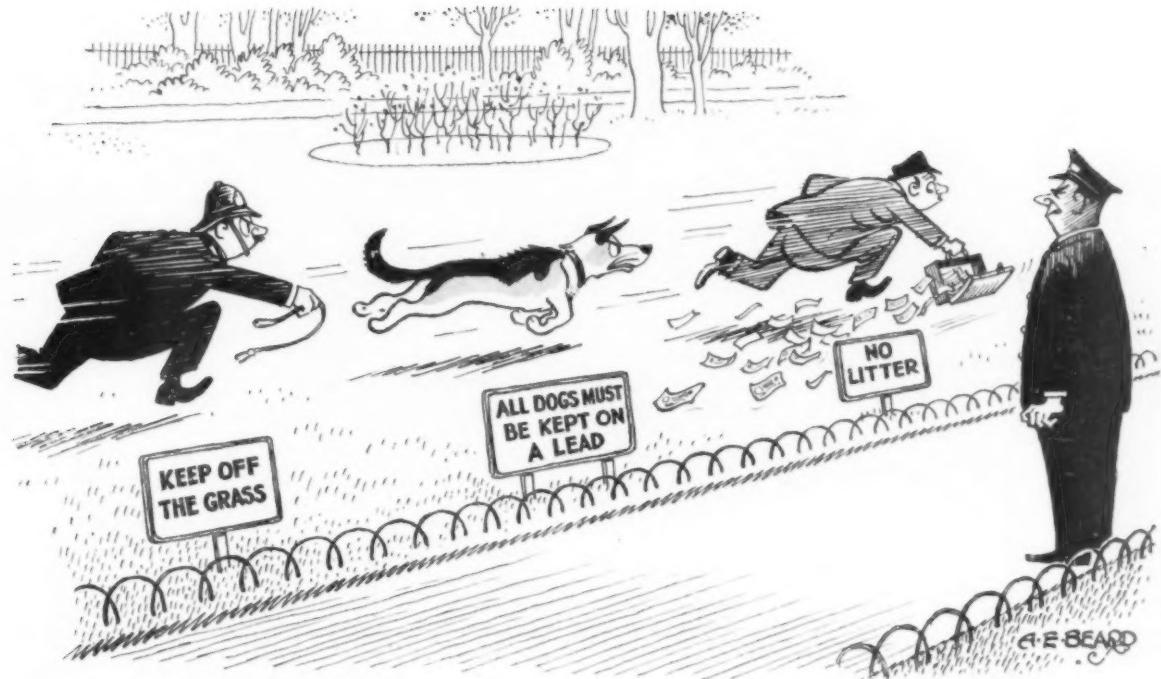
*What though my Love be old? My
Lines are new.
If Truth be false, are Falsehood's
truths untrue?*

and found its lyric apotheosis in *Madrigal*, which he wrote for the School Concert Choir to music by Mrs. Owtram:

UNISON: Tender breeze on balmy wing,

ALTOS: Balmy, balmy, balmy wing,





TREBLES: Blushing blossom hither fling!
BASSES: Hither fling!
TENORS: Whither whither?
BASSES: Hither! Hither!
TENORS: Whither, whither, whither fling?
TREBLES: Hey fling-a-ling-ling.

UNISON: Venus, ousting bloody Mars,
ALTOS: Bloody, bloody, bloody Mars,
TREBLES: Reigns supreme among the stars,
BASSES: 'Mong the stars;
TENORS: Laughing (BASSES) chaffing
BASSES: Chaffing (TENORS) laughing
TENORS: Laughing now with sweet ha-ha's.
TREBLES: Ha-ha-ha-ha-ha's.

I recall how painstakingly Mrs. Owtram had interwoven the final stanzic "Fling-a-lings" and "Ha-ha-ha's" into a lengthy *Coda*; and how Mr. Moser, with a single prearranged signal from his lively baton, brought the entire, rousing little piece to a not ill-controlled close.

I have no examples of Hu_{gh}'s creative prose save his letters ("But oh! but oh! such a day!") and a few yellowing but felicitous translations he did for me as exercises—of which this, from the *Iliad*,

still seems to me peculiarly fresh and boyish:

Now gird on thy silver-studded baldric and thy spear that casts long shadows about thy neck and thy well-wrought greaves and thy sword* of the hide of seven perforated oxen and thy helmet with its plume that nods in the wind even as flies about a milk-pail.

So spake he, and straightway the Far-Darter girded on his silver-studded baldric and his spear that cast long shadows about his neck and his well-wrought greaves and his sword of the hide of seven perforated oxen and his helmet with its plume that nodded in the wind even as flies about a milk-pail.

Then came forth Nestor from the wall and spake words of advice to him knowing everything already: O my son, this is indeed thus and in very truth thou reminst me of the time when I too girded on my silver-studded baldric and my . . .

I blame myself greatly for having lost the remaining pages.

He was a pretty fair dab at Greek and Latin verse. I recollect his pleasure at my praise for a particularly happy hexametrical rendering of the line "'Twixt apple-tree and apple-tree we

flutter" from Christina Rosetti's *Butterflies*:

*A frutice ad fruticem propere pro-
peravimus usque*

and the thundering pentameter of his opening elegiac couplet on Tennyson's *Break, break, break*:

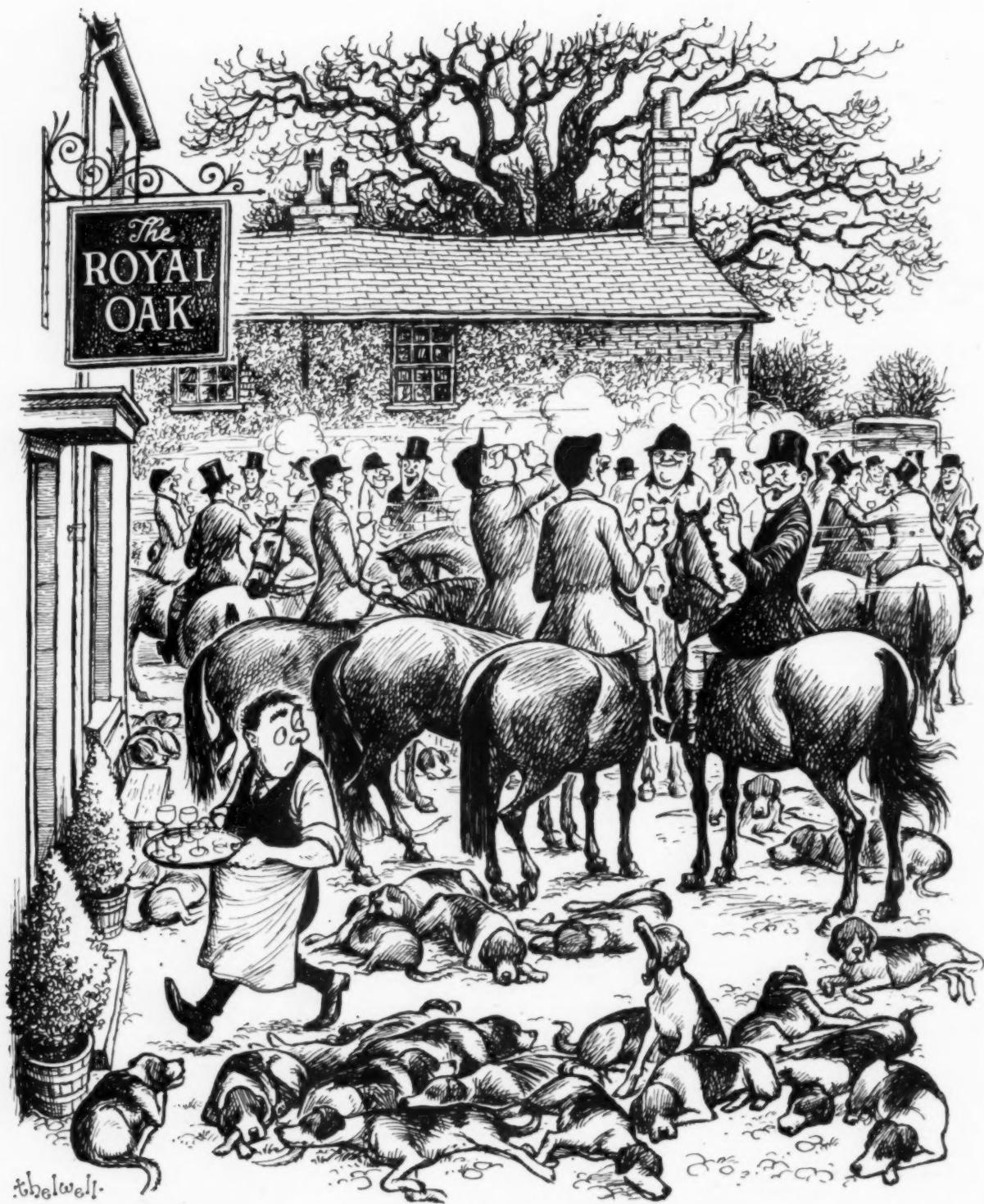
O fluctus, fluctus! Rumpite, rumpite jam!

Now the waves of mortality have broken over his dear head with a vengeance, and we must ask whether he will yet achieve posthumously the poet's fame which life denied him. Writing, alas! was his only youthful proficiency—and he bore his total lack of success on the playing-field with apparent stoicism.

Curiously enough, among his effects in the Brondesbury rooms where he died were found a silver-plated cup engraved "H. Pirbright Watson: Pole Vault 1927," a salver inscribed "To H. P. W., the greatest little stroke of them all, from a grateful Crew," and a cigarette-case whose inner surface bore the legend "To Hugh, for his help on the North Col, from Miranda. Zermatt, 1923."

In 1923 he can only have been eleven and, at this age, I am confident that he never smoked.

* He meant shield, of course.



"Same again, George."

Speak Up!

By CLAUD COCKBURN

A NY man with a spark of decent feeling is from time to time glad to see Women, as such, publicly scorned and insulted, and this spectacle was richly afforded by prominent woman journalist Anne Scott-James who wrote a most thoughtful article deriding and deplored other prominent women who had omitted to make pronouncements or utterances on the subject of Suez, Middle East and all that, thus proving, in the writer's opinion, that the whole woman business is a flop and a delusion and they might as well have stayed where they came from.

The writer made no mention of it, but her criticism applies to foreign women just as much as to British. No French woman has said anything worth reporting for years, and what, may one ask, of Mrs. Molotov? There was a period when nobody expected her to utter much, because she was known to be busy trying to run the Russian cosmetic industry with Joe S. leaning over her shoulder and changing the colour of the lipsticks every few days.

When Stalin at length sent her off to Siberia, she is believed to have said to Molotov "Well, don't sit there like a bum on a Praesidium, do something"; but apparently all he was prepared to do at the time was to offer to help her pack. However, he did get her back in the end, and women-lovers everywhere have been waiting for some worthwhile pronouncement about the Olympic Games, or the Duchess of Windsor or the Republic of Ireland. But Mrs. M. has simply not bothered to contribute.

Small wonder that more and more thoughtful journalists are asking: Have women been worth while?

People who now claim to be utterly shocked and disillusioned by this tendency of women to hang about silently on the sidelines, being choosey and making a fuss about what they will or will not comment on, should have been warned by the similar attitude of the well-known woman Florence Nightingale who so coolly chose not to pray for George IV. "I thought," she said, "people very good who prayed for him, and wondered if he could have been much worse if he had not been prayed for."

Who gave her the authority to decide a thing like that off her own hook? A good strong prayer from her might have been just the tonic the monarch required.

The fact is that this flabby notion that it is all right to let things pass without comment is dangerously widespread and not only among women, so that one was pleased to note a radio or TV critic barking angrily the other day at people on a Brains Trust who had fallen into the slothful and impertinent habit of holding aloof from discussion of this subject or that, simply on the ground that they knew absolutely nothing about it. He warmly applauded the chairman or question-master for smoking them out of their funk-holes and making them gas away regardless.

The sort of man who, on being asked by the Gallup Poll whether, *qua* Genius and Hero, he thinks Mr. Butler more sublime than Mr. Macmillan, or sees both of them as somewhat o'er-topped by Mr. Robens, replies that he "doesn't know" is unworthy of the name of citizen and should be disfranchised.

People who never can lay their hand on an opinion when it's wanted, who keep the man waiting in the rain while they muddle about in the back of a drawer and then come out with this pitiful plea of ignorance as an excuse for non-utterance, are definitely not what the country needs, and statistics show that more often than not they are also the type of listless mooners who never write to the papers and are capable of sitting through a whole evening's programme without ringing up the B.B.C. to say they regard this item as an affront to dogs, and that as a deliberate incitement to juvenile delinquency.

Of course we all know what they are up to—they are trying to keep alive the myth about silent people being somehow better, more reliable, than what these dumb-bells have the impudence to refer to as "chatterers." That myth, as everyone should be aware, was fabricated by men who, in the days of enormous banquets, could not trust themselves to keep sober enough to make a proper after-dinner speech, and, after hiccuping out a few disjointed phrases, sat down heavily and later spread the story that their inability to

say anything much implied superior ability in some other department.

Frequently these unpronouncers find, when it is too late, that their powers of pronunciation have atrophied from lack of use. There was a Member of Parliament in the late 1930s who for years and years said absolutely nothing, causing victims of the above-mentioned myth to believe that he was "thinking the more." Came the war and the fall of Paris and so on, and now he really did want to say something. But when he caught the Speaker's eye all he could produce was a suggestion that the thing to do was to make the Duke of Gloucester Commander-in-Chief.

Leader-writers and columnists are often—as a result of withholding judgment, having no desire to draw premature conclusions, waiting until the facts are known before interpreting them, and other occupational diseases of their trade—sufferers from this type of slow atrophy or semi-paralysis of the tongue. Around three in the afternoon they get the news that the pound sterling is selling at two to the lira on the Rome exchange, Onassis has bought the Suez Canal and sold it to an unknown bidder, and the Texas oilfields have sunk beneath the Atlantic Ocean, and they consult both P.R.O.s at Number 10—the one who is resigning in dudgeon and the one who is just getting his new and imaginative approach to the





"Am I right for the Children's Christmas Party?"

problem of public relations moved into the press-conference room—and they write and write, but all that comes out next morning is that the situation is indubitably grave and that the right course is for everyone to do what seems best for the country as a whole.

This malady is known, technically, as "Steinism," on account of what happened to the learned and famous Professor Stein in the poem of the German poet Morgenstern. One morning when the entire Stein family was at breakfast there was an unusual noise on the stairs and a knock at the door, and when they opened it there on the landing was a horse. The horse said "I just wanted to say that I am the horse which for many a long year has

pulled the milk-cart which delivers your milk, and I thought it would be kind of nice to introduce myself."

The horse turned and trotted down the stairs, and the entire family Stein stood in expectant silence gazing at the Professor and awaiting his comment on the event. It came. "That," said Professor Stein, "was a hitherto unheard-of occurrence."

A more cheering example, an example, that is, of ultra-non-Steinism by a man who realized that if you speak only when you know something about the matter in hand you will go dumb, was afforded years ago in Washington by a Senator who may serve as the very prototype of all those who realize that the smaller your stock of knowledge the more

necessary it is to keep it in constant and audible action.

He was on a committee which was trying to find out, from returning travellers, what on earth was going on in Russia. The only thing the Senator knew about Russia was that the Volga was there. Whenever anyone mentioned anything or anyone in Russia—as it might be Beria, or Ulanova, or the Marx-Lenin Institute—the Senator stopped him, jutted a finger at him and said "Now just a minute. Be perfectly candid. I want to get this point absolutely clear: *Is that on the Volga?*?"

By the end of the investigation the Senator had the reputation of an expert who had certainly put a stop to what might have been a lot of shady evasions about the Volga.

S S

Lines Written in Early Evening

"The Ministry of Works says darkly that although 'certain methods' would get rid of the (Trafalgar Square) starlings, these would not be acceptable to the public."—*The Sunday Times*

I HEARD a thousand raucous notes
As through Trafalgar Square I
stroked
At that sweet hour when homeward
thoughts
The tired mind enfold.

The starlings o'er me swooped and
swayed

With sheer, malicious pleasure,
And the least motion that they made
Did harm in no small measure,

Stuffed owls and sharp electric shocks,
Shrill shrieks and detonations,
Seemed but to spur those feathered
flocks
To further depredations.

And other weapons, deadlier far,
The Ministry of Works might choose,
But for one reason—that they are
Too horrible to use.

My faith in "Nature's holy plan"
Is now, alas, much shaken;
And I must think, do all I can,
Wordsworth, you were mistaken.

E. V. MILNER .

America Day by Day

By P. G. WODEHOUSE

TO a thoughtful man like myself—I am the detached, observant type—it is interesting to note how trends come and go in the New York theatre. One year it's one thing, the next another. This season there has been a terrific boom in eccentric relatives. Everyone with a father who was a perfect scream or an aunt who on the evidence ought to have been certified at an early age has dashed to his desk and written:

ACT ONE. Scene One.

The drawing-room at Loopy Manor.
Enter FATHER, leading alligator on leash or

AUNT JULIA: Cocktails, anyone? (She pours cocktail. It explodes in a sheet of blue flame.)

So far we have had *The Loud Red Patrick* (crazy father), *Auntie Mame* (barely compos aunt) and *The Happiest Millionaire* (another crazy father), but the season is early yet and more must surely be coming along shortly. The unanimity of Broadway playwrights is like that of the Norwegian lemmings, with this important difference, that the playwrights do not rush into the sea and drown themselves, a circumstance which I for one regard as unfortunate.

I must admit, however, that people seem to like these peeps into the padded cell—the advance sale of *Auntie Mame* is \$1,500,000—but for myself I find the feeling creeping over me that one more eccentric relative and I shall be behaving like the Father in *The Happiest Millionaire*, of whom the butler as he enters (with a black eye) inquires “Did you yell, sir?” (He got the black eye because father, in addition to chumming with alligators, insists on the domestic staff boxing with him.)

Speaking of the theatre, I was one of a bunch of the boys who were whooping it up in the Malemute saloon the other night, and the conversation turned to the subject of poise on the stage, that indefinable quality that makes the great actor or actress able to carry on unruffled when things have gone wrong and the novice is losing his or her head. One of those present instanced the case of a female star, very popular on Broadway, who was playing a scene with a much younger actress when the stage

manager, getting his cues mixed, rang the on-stage telephone at a moment when there was no place in the play's action for a 'phone call.

The novice sat there petrified, but not the star. Calmly she walked to the telephone, picked up the receiver and said “Hullo?” while her co-worker looked on reverently, feeling “What presence! What composure!” The star stood listening for a moment, then, turning to the young actress, held out the telephone and said “Here. It's for you.”

Did that make you laugh? If so, I can tell you why. According to Dr. Edmund Bergler, whose book on The Sense of Humour has just been published by the Intercontinental Medical Book Corporation, “laughter is a defence against a defence. Both manoeuvres are instituted by the subconscious ego. The cruelty of the superego is counteracted by changing punishment into inner pleasure. The superego reproaches the ego for this inner pleasure, and the ego then institutes two new defences, the triad of the mechanism of orality and laughter.” So now you know. But

whatever became of the old-fashioned laugher who used to laugh at things because they were funny?

What a worrying life teen-age girls in America seem to have. Problems arising all the time. It is fortunate for them that almost every newspaper keeps on its staff a sympathetic adviser to whom they can go for counsel. As for instance:

I am a fifteen-year-old girl. I met a boy named Alvin and I only went out with him once because he is a slob. He won a cheap doll on a nickel chance and gave it to me to remember him by. The next day his mother came and wanted the doll back. I already gave the doll to my sister for her birthday as I didn't want to remember the slob anyway, and his mother said I had better mail it to her or she would have the police come and get it. Shall I take the doll away from my little sister or what?

The reply to this, arrived at no doubt after much thought, was:

Egg yolks can be kept fresh for several days if they are covered with cold water and stored in the refrigerator.

So keep a stiff upper lip, girls. These advisers can always think of something.



Hollowood

“Goodness, whatever's the matter with Rover?”



Rockefellers in Glass Houses

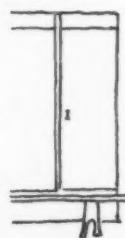
By LORD KINROSS

NEW YORK

THE Americans are a people who do not entertain a great deal. They lack the means to do so. The greatest compliment paid to me in America was over the telephone, one morning in Washington. My hostess being out and her house being without servants, I answered its ring and took a message for her to call back a number in Philadelphia. When, on returning, she did so the caller remarked "I felt sure you'd get the message. Your English butler sounded so reliable."

There are all too few English butlers left in America, for they command all too much money—and I, alas! am not one of them. There are hardly any "daily women" left in America either. Millionairesses are making their own beds day after day. One, living in a country house in Connecticut, remarked to me "We are very lucky with our help. I have an excellent woman who comes in for a few hours on Fridays."

San Francisco alone is rich in butlers. I recall the year's lushest parties in its elegant suburb of Burlingame, where hospitality thrives, from noon until dawn, on what used to be called an American scale. Champagne sparkles amid the glitter of old silver in Edwardian mansions reeking of tuberoses and strewn with Fabergé boxes. Boards groan with lobsters at little luncheons for sixty, with *pâté de foie gras* at intimate dinners for thirty-two. Ladies in garden-party frocks, gentlemen with orchids in their button-holes, stroll together among the begonias on immaculate lawns, beneath the shade of well-manicured trees. Night after night there is a ball in some



country club which until only yesterday was a gentleman's mansion.

The Republican Convention, in the city itself, stirs in me the most Roman memories of the year. On Nob's Hill, where the nob live, banquets raged on carpets strewn with rose petals. The Governor gave a ball, treating eleven thousand Republicans to three thousand magnums of Californian champagne in eleven thousand glasses flown, in a blaze of publicity, from New York; also two tons of crab, thirty-five crates of salad, and a ten-foot elephant, made of dyed grey chrysanthemums, revolving on a gilded dais. A real elephant, led by a lady in Turkish trousers, lazily pawed at the guests with its trunk, disarranging an occasional corsage. A beautician gave another ball, with French champagne but no elephants, to which four hundred Republicans were invited and six hundred came.

I myself, gravitating to "the wrong side of the tracks," preferred Greek pot-luck on a disused ferry-boat, transformed by a Greek painter into a studio; the conversation of Chinese philosophers in a house among tree-tops, the walls papered all over with photographs and horoscopes, in the "cold water" apartment of a former President's grandson, who sold newspapers happily for a living.

In Hollywood the *grande dames* are the lady columnists. It is they, decked out in fabulous feathered hats and gowns encrusted with pearls, who give the fashionable parties, in a setting of silver-framed signed photographs of the monarchs of screen and throne. Otherwise life there is serious. I remember a luncheon at which my neighbour,



Miss Claudette Colbert, showed a deep concern about the situation in Suez; a cocktail-party at which Miss Greer Garson was sorry to miss me, because she had heard I was a famous naturalist, and at which Miss Zsa Zsa Gabor was at some pains to explain to me that the Gabors are an older family than the Monroes and the Dorses.

I remember an afternoon party in the grounds of a French château in Denver, Colorado, at which the hostess, wearing a brassière and a pair of tight Hawaiian pants, embossed with lovers' knots in velvet, served her guests, mostly strangers to her, with cold curried prawns by a warmed-up swimming-pool, and showed them photograph albums entitled respectively "Ellie gives a Party, Ellie gives another Party, Ellie's last Party, and Look up at the Birdie." Of the parties I did *not* go to, I remember a Sunday brunch in New Orleans, starting at 10 a.m., and the telephone calls from brunch-drunk friends, at 4.30 p.m., urging me to change my mind; also many festivities, in New York, of what might be called Buffet Society, where I thankfully never quite made the grade.

Outside its boundaries New York is a quiet sort of place, where nobody much knows anybody else, and people work hard or pretend to, and go to bed early with a glass of hot milk, having previously hotted up a Hamburger in an immaculate five-thousand-dollar kitchen. When they do give a party it is usually *for* someone: some visiting V.I.P., for example. During one hectic week I remember a party every night, to have the pleasure of meeting, and going on and on meeting, Miss Rebecca West. When it was over I reverted happily to my V.U.P. ways, relaxing in the company of a few groups of cronies quite unknown to and uninterested in each other.

I remember some more New York parties, all the same. I remember a whole week of them when I was best man at a wedding, and the slight shock which ran round the table when the bridegroom, an Englishman, declared his intention of asking for the English as opposed to the American marriage service. This included, as he explained, the endowment of his bride with all his worldly goods, and the worshipping of her with his body. ("A bit ranchy, that," remarked one of the bridesmaids.)



I remember a large dinner-party given for an exhibition of modern art, in a house, consisting of a single room, belonging to some Rockefellers. Its walls were of rough brick, whitewashed, and hung with substantial masterpieces of distinctly non-objective painting and sculpture. The room was divided into three parts by walls of plate glass, the second part being a pool of water, which it was necessary to trip across unsecurely by stepping-stones in order to reach the bedroom—now converted into a sitting-room—and the offices beyond.

From here, seen and magnified through the two glass walls and across the sheet of water, the guests in their modish dresses had the air of creatures sequestered in some aquarium, swimming and gesturing and mouthing to each other amid the strange shapes of the sculpture, like fish from the more exotic tropical depths. This spectacle,

being silent, was strangely soothing, and I was reminded of the remark which a lady, a public relations executive, had made to me at luncheon a few days before. "I can only relax," she said, "in the company of fish." Hence, doubtless, those aquariums, so fashionable everywhere as interior decoration—though the Hollywood tropical fish-mongers sell specimens so unrelaxing as a black shark from Borneo and a man-eater from the Amazon, described as "the most colorful spectacle in captivity."

More rarefied still, but in the Baroque manner, was a party given by Madame Helena Rubinstein, not merely a beautician but a Princess as well, wearing a necklace of outsize raw pearls, in her "Triplex pent-house" on Park Avenue. Here the guests consorted with an assembly of African idols, while tapestries by Picasso glared down at

them, cross-eyed, from the walls. Wandering in a daze through marble halls adorned with busts and planted with tropical foliage of the variety known as "plastic," they found themselves in an Indonesian bar, with a counter of black glass, beneath purple and amber mirrors; then in a dining-room designed by Dali, with the face of Madame Rubinstein on one wall, built into a cliff; then in Madame Rubinstein's bedroom, its great glass double bed floodlit from the floor, with a Life of Madame Lupescu on the bedside table, glass chairs surrounding it, and a galaxy of pink glass ranged along the walls between pink-lit, pink silk curtains. Upstairs, towering high above the roofs of New York, they found a long picture gallery, about to be converted by Mr. Cecil Beaton from a mediaeval banqueting hall into an Edwardian conservatory, and containing among its treasures a portrait by Tchelitchev of Madame Rubinstein's daughter, her face transformed into a medical specimen of the tissues of the brain.

It was at this party, or perhaps another the same evening, that I met an American peeress who deplored the decline of education throughout the United States. "Nowadays," she lamented, "people are becoming so ignorant they don't even wear collars and ties."

More austere were the soirées, high up on Fifth Avenue, given by the last

of New York's intellectual hostesses, a tall formidable lady in rimless spectacles and a pale blue satin gown sweeping her ankles. We were invited for 8.30. At nine o'clock precisely, after an interval for drinks, the hostess announced not dinner but Mr. Aldous Huxley. For the invitation had read "Discussion. Supper," in that order.

For an hour Mr. Huxley, with eloquence and charm, lectured us on the "Brave New World," and how very much worse it had turned out to be than even he, in his darkest forebodings, had ever imagined. "Soma," his tranquillizing drug, had indeed been granted to us, and was now on sale at every drugstore in the form of Milltown and Equanil. But his imagination had never conceived of such amenities as automation, and the atom-bomb, and the fact that more and more people were being born and moreover staying alive. The outlook for the future, we gathered, did not seem to him all that brave.

When Mr. Huxley had finished, the hostess rose to her feet and in a melodious, challenging voice said "Well, I am sure we are all very grateful to Mr. Huxley for his interesting talk, and that we all disagree profoundly with almost every word he has said." She then called upon a number of distinguished Americans to voice this disagreement, and for the next hour they did so, at length and only a trifle less eloquently, most of them expressing

the opinion that the world was, on the contrary, becoming a better and better place all the time. At eleven o'clock punctually we went in to an excellent supper.

At another of these parties, where the lecturer was a Harvard professor and his subject "The Anatomy of Revolution," I was shocked to hear, suddenly, a trumpeting snore, and still more shocked to realize that it was I who had snored it. Later, with delicate tact, my hostess, divining perhaps that I had had an exhausting day, called upon two English guests to express their views on this subject. But neither of them, to my relief, was myself.

The smartest party I went to in New York was at the Savoy Ballroom. It was a charity gala and an object lesson in decorum, at which the guests sat in parties by the ballroom floor, with bottles of Scotch and champagne on their tables, talking and smiling at one another politely, and getting up gracefully to dance, with faultless rhythm, to the hottest of New York's bands. The dresses and jewels of the ladies, and their figures as well, were as chic as any normally to be seen at El Morocco, the smart haunt of this Buffet Society.

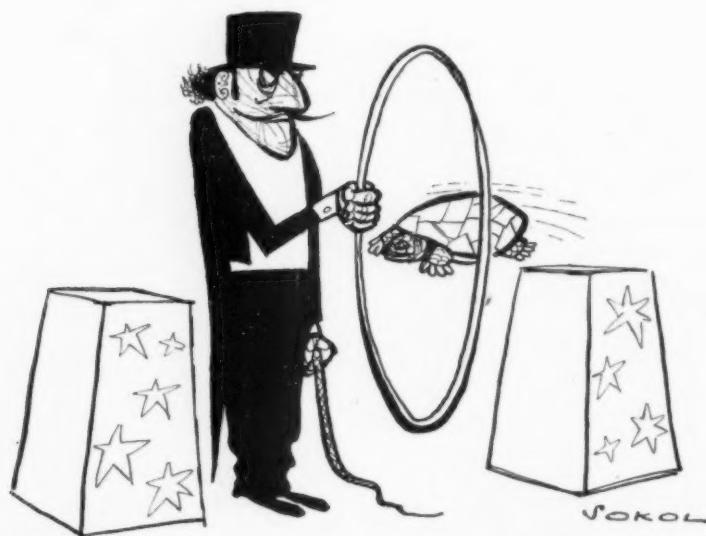
Towards one o'clock in the morning there were speeches, followed by a solemn coronation of a chosen "King and Queen" of Morningside, the district in which the charitable enterprise, a housing project for the workers, was situated. The Queen wore a tiara and a simple white frock, the King a green satin robe, fringed with gold. They were crowned by a parson, in a clerical collar, then charmingly, primly, swung around in an old-fashioned waltz. The Savoy Ballroom is in Harlem, hence all, save my friends and myself, were negroes.

The band changed its tune from the waltz to the Charleston, and all took the floor with them, dancing gravely at first, then relaxing involuntarily, bodies kindling to the hot music with an atavistic but decorous excitement.



"To-night as a verger stoked the great stoves in the gloom of Chester's medieval cathedral preparations were being made to hold the trial of the Rev. Philip St. John Wilson Ross in a tiny chamber separated from the knave by a grille of open stone-work."—*Daily Mail*.

Please don't prejudice the court.



PUNCH, December 26 1956

THE NATIONAL MAN'S WEEKLY

mister

4½^D

SECRETS OF A ROYAL TAILOR

HOW TO KEEP
YOUR WOMAN
by M'DONALD HAIGHY



BARGAIN
OFFER - INSIDE

*Matching cummerbund
and waistcoat....*



ALL ABOUT THE
New
MARLON BRANDO
HAIRSTYLE

Norman Mailer

mister

WHAT's your secret of a happy marriage?" I asked Hollywood star Knut Crag when I met him and his very pretty wife Margharita the other day. The Crags have been married three long years, and that's something of a record in Hollywood these days. Knut confided his secret to me, which I pass on as a tip well worth following. "Early in the morning, while Margharita is still sleeping, I get quietly up, shave, brush my hair, and, if necessary, change my pyjamas. So that when she does wake up, I'm there, all radiant, as I was when we went to sleep the night before. She has never seen me untidy or unshaven. That way we keep the glamour of our marriage untouched by the sordid details that ruin so many happy families."

* * *

Time was when hair in the hair-brush sent one rushing to the barber for hair restorative. No longer. Since His Royal Highness the Duke of Edinburgh became noticeably thin on top, it has become quite the fashion to have a bald spot. At the Savoy the other day I noticed that M. Charles Boyer was *sans toupet*, and even Mr. Bing Crosby has been photographed without the hiding hat he hitherto affected. But remember, to be good and glossy, a bald pate must be massaged night and morning with a tonic lotion. My favourite is a mixture of pure vegetable oil and tonic water.

* * *

Readers of our romantic serial, *The Bonnie Wee Laddie* (this week's instalment

starts on page ninety-one), will be fascinated to learn that author Oliver Edwards papers his walls with old copies of newspapers. "Only the respectable ones, of course!" he told us, with a boyish grin. "I find *The Times* absolutely perfect."

* * *

Have you heard that spats are coming back? I always did think it was a pity that those elegant and comfy appendages to formal dress should have disappeared off the feet of the nation. Now I have heard whispers of an exciting new plan to revive the fashion, but in the latest fabrics and colours. Can you imagine anything more exciting than walking down Piccadilly wearing Terylene canta-loupe shade spats?

* * *

There's no doubt that 1956 has been the Italian Year for men: those box-shaped jackets with the deliciously high lapels, the sharp pointed shoes which squeeze your toes ever so tight, and hair-down-the-back-of-the-neck hairstyle have combined to make *signori* of us all. Now, a little bird tells me that 1957 will be the Spanish Year—so look out for canvas suits fitting like sacks, dazzlingly shined shoes and hair, rings on your fingers and bells on your toes, and diamond-studded toothpicks. Ole!

* * *

Beards are definitely back. Can it be some of those intriguing photos of Gregory Peck in *Moby Dick* that have started the craze, or is there something deeper in it?

Between Us Chaps.

by the Editor

My illustrations show some of the smarter styles you see in the West End these days:



The Robinson Crusoe, with that uncombed, desert island look.



The Smiling Cavalier, just a little shorter than the Laughing style, popular last season.



The Teddy Seven, reminding one of the gay, eye-for-a-pretty-woman monarch.

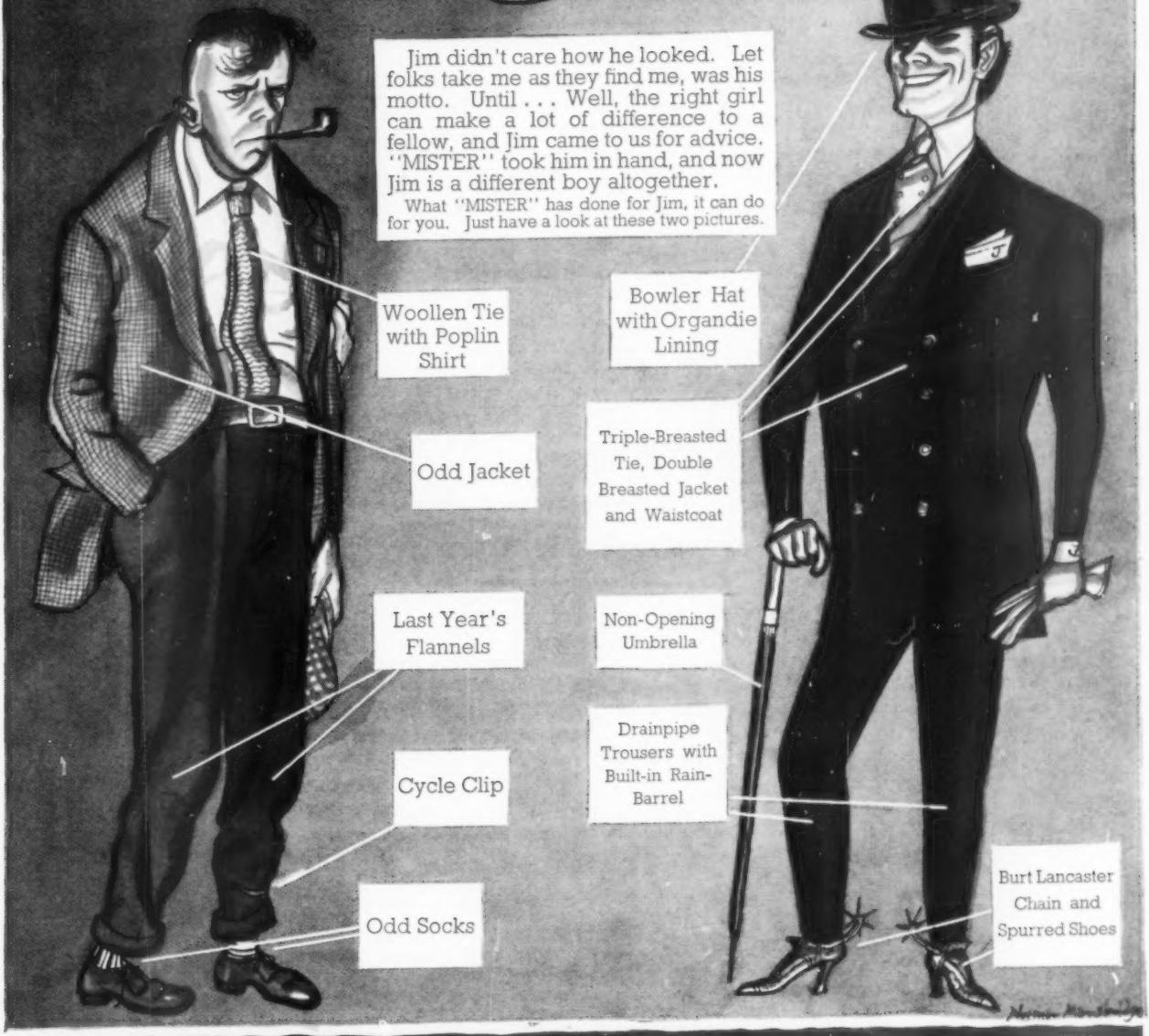


The G.B.S. 100, celebrating that grand old beard-wearer's centenary

Verve Changed Jim!

Jim didn't care how he looked. Let folks take me as they find me, was his motto. Until . . . Well, the right girl can make a lot of difference to a fellow, and Jim came to us for advice. "MISTER" took him in hand, and now Jim is a different boy altogether.

What "MISTER" has done for Jim, it can do for you. Just have a look at these two pictures.



**IN NEXT WEEK'S
80-PAGE ISSUE!**

"MAN IN HIS GLORY"
N^o 1 *of an exciting new series taking you right into Man's most privileged stronghold—his CLUB! In this first article, DESMOND HEARTSPADE writes about the Atheneum*

also  *and* 

The Dashing Duke.

Glamorous Souvenir Pictures of the DUKE OF KENT

Gay, soigné, daring, amusing, and yet so unmistakably royal

Jerseys and Jeans

All the newest news about the latest leisure-time fashions.

ALL IN NEXT WEEK'S *Mister***RIGHT DRESS! Continued from p. 175**

SYDNEY. (a) Simple three-button jacket, jetted pockets, single vent in the back. (b) Flannel or wool-and-Nocresine mixture, zip front. (c) A gay check is best.

KENNETH. The curly-brimmed bowler is for the City, the brown soft hat turned up at both sides is the current fashion for the week-end, the white crash-helmet for the motor-cycle, and the khaki beret with the silver badge over the left eye for the Suez Canal.

**Our Paper Pattern Order Coupon.**

To obtain the practical yet attractive Father Christmas costume illustrated on page 168, fill in this coupon and send it with a postal order for 2s. 6d. It takes six yards of red flannel for measurements up to 36 in., six and a half yards for measurements up to 45 in., and pro rata.

Full instructions for making up and wearing are included with the pattern.

DON'T LEAVE IT TOO LATE AND RISK NOT HAVING IT READY FOR CHRISTMAS!

IN THE SHOPS

by

Tom

HAVEN'T you always wanted one of those glamorous soft-leather tobacco-pouches in the colours of your very own school? I saw some yesterday at Glassbrows in Beat Street which had me reaching straight for my note-case. They made a most exhilarating splash of colour laid out along the counter, the Old Etonians and the Old Harrovians and the rest mingling quite harmoniously for once! For slipping in the pocket they roll up quite small, and yet hold all the tobacco you could want. Prices vary according to size.

* * * * *

We've all done it—just as we're dressing in a hurry for some exciting game of ice-hockey our stud falls under the bed and simply won't give itself up. Well, here is something that will stop that nightmare for ever—the Holdphast range of unlosable studs. A fine, almost invisible strand of horsehair anchors them firmly to the trouser-buttons. Drop them, and they hang harmlessly in mid-air. All good men's shops have them, 1s. 6d. each, or a matched set of three for 4s. 6d.

* * * * *

Here's a tip for the man who wears side-whiskers. Don't rely on the view you get in your shaving mirror to get those ends off clean and square. The Profilex shaving mirror has two panels cunningly arranged to show you your face as She will see it sitting next to you in the cinema. What's more, the panels can also be adjusted to show you the back of your head if you're one of those boys who finds trouble in hiding the shine of your scalp. I really do recommend these at only 97s. 6d.

* * * * *

And now—something for Her! Girls treasure a handbag all the more if it is a present from someone they love. In Sparrods there are some quite lovely ones in grey plastic with a neat iron padlock fixing, which somehow manage to be feminine enough for the softer sex and yet at the same time to retain a subtle aura of masculine taste. At £9 they make an exciting present for that special occasion!

* * * * *

If you are the practical type (and all men secretly believe they are that, don't they?) here is some good news about glue. Evergum is the name of a new kind of sticky stuff, which will stick everything from cardboard to chromium. The handy-size tube costs 11d. It's made by the makers of Stainoff, and that's a good enough guarantee for anyone, isn't it?

FATHER CHRISTMAS

Name

Address

Stomach measurement

AS HIGH AS HER HEART

Our Grand Romantic Story.

by TARZAN PHELPS

ILLUSTRATED BY NORMAN MANSBRIDGE

BURBRIDGE HOLT closed the library door silently behind him and waited a moment, listening to Grazia's silvery voice, muffled now through the door's stout oak. "You're imagining things, Hugo," he heard her say.

"Perhaps?" It was the Duke's deep growl.

There was a silence. Then Grazia's voice came evenly, on a changed note. "I'm having another armagnac. Join me?" The danger was past for the moment. Burbridge straightened his footman's waistcoat and passed noiselessly down the corridor and through the green baize door at the end.

It would mean that Grazia would be angry with him later that evening when they met, as usual, by the ornamental lake in East Park. Angry not only because the glances he gave her—and even before her ducal husband he found them difficult to control—might lead the old nobleman to smell a rat; but because, besides being the woman he loved, she was a duchess too, and her high breeding resented the overt expression of emotions.

Burbridge began idly to clean the silver, his memory still dwelling on that day at the station. "I think I'll sit in the front with you, Holt," she had said. "I always feel lonely in the back . . ."

And that was how it had all begun. First the car rides, then the walks in the woods . . .

He had been shy at first. He had felt awkward when she had begun to call him "Mr. Holt," though his heart leaped at the mark of changed status. On her lips, even "Burbridge" sounded embarrassing. And they had had their first tiff when he had begged her to call him "Burb." She refused. For some days he sulked, and addressed her as "Your Grace" even when she was in his arms in the old punt under the

(Continued on p. 163)





H. MANLEY TORSO

SHE IS TOUCHY

My girl says that she loves me but is a great practical joker, such as introducing me to her friends as a Dr. and they tell me their ailments, and laughing when I blush. If I complain she may think me "stuffy" and end our love. She is touchy and once when I criticized her home perm was abusive about my mother, who is L.R.A.M. What do you advise? I am 17½.

Your girl does not really sound worthy of you, old chap, and I hope you stood up to her. L.R.A.M.s have nothing to be ashamed of. As to her jokes, the example given seems in poor taste to me, as the medical profession is a very honourable one in this country. Why not stop seeing her for a year or two? She may be passing through a phase.

WAGGING TONGUES

So-called friends in the neighbourhood are spreading mud on my bride of three weeks and I, though she is an ideal

helpmeet of 36, and I have been, until my recent matrimony, a clean-living widower (87). Are there steps I can pursue when they say I married her for her money? This was only £45 in the P.O., and remains without inroads.

I do not think you have a case in law, unless the gossip produces harmful effect—i.e. if you were to take your lives as a result. But you could surely silence these spiteful tongues by showing them your wife's P.O. savings book?

PERMITTED HER KISS

My work as Chairman of a large joint-stock bank throws me into frequent contact with a young female employee of great beauty, intelligence and wit, who is an invaluable aide to me in administering the bank's affairs. At the annual Staff Ball last week she joined me in an alcove and asked whether she might kiss me. I lightheartedly allowed her to do so. Would it be correct to make any reference to the incident when next she comes into my room with a Weekly Statement of Liabilities and Assets for me to sign?

Only you can decide. In fact there seems little point in my having printed your letter.

"Thin-on-Top," Esher. Napoleon had a bald patch at Marengo, but did Josephine care? No, there is no National Health toupee guaranteed to stay on while living.

"Young Jamie," Glasgow. TV isn't life, you know, Jamie, even if it is showing *Romeo and Juliet*. I advise you to tell your father. *H.F.E., Rochampton.* It is difficult to be sure: there have been many "Tarzans" since the series began. I cannot give you the chest measurement of Edgar Rice Burroughs, but you might try the *Daily Telegraph* information department.

"Sixth Former." There is no "rule" about giving an apple to the teacher. You could give grapes, cucumber, or anything in season. *"Worried Brown Eyes," Cheltenham.* I agree. When a girl comes home from school and knocks her father down there is no alternative but to go to her headmistress.

A.B.H., Shamley Green. I should accept the assurance of your medical advisers, and stop worrying. Doctors have ways of knowing if a person is changing sex.

L.G.I., Robertsbridge. No, L.G.I., medical practice does not actually recognize a "dangerous age" in the human male, though divorce court statistics are suggestive. But if, at your age, the urge to return to the double-breasted waistcoat is as strong as you say, you might take elementary precautions, such as not "sitting-out" with attractive young teenagers.

OUR FRIENDS THE STARS

See what the Stars have in store for YOU to-day, old man

Aquarius (Jan. 21—Feb. 19). Your train will be extra punctual this morning. Perseverance will earn you a seat on the next one.

Pisces (Feb. 20—Mar. 20). Wear a bolder coloured tie. It may produce dramatic results. Wear bolder coloured braces too, but do not expect too much.

Aries (Mar. 21—Apr. 20). A letter from your landlord may cause you sorrow in the morning, but don't worry, there's nothing you can do about it.

Taurus (Apr. 21—May 21). A dispute about your dog may lead to a quarrel with someone of the opposite sex.

Gemini (May 22—June 21). A dispute about someone of the opposite sex may lead to your spending a lot of time in the doghouse.

Cancer (June 22—July 23). Domestic chores will occupy all the time you can spare from leisure, sleep and business commitments.

Leo (July 24—Aug. 23). Not perhaps the kind of day it might have been if things had turned out differently. Be careful if you take risks.

Virgo (Aug. 24—Sep. 23). You will have your usual luck in a gambling venture. Choose a cheaper brand of tobacco.

Libra (Sep. 24—Oct. 23). You will encounter some unpopularity in a place of entertainment but things will be better after a few rounds. Go straight home.

Scorpio (Oct. 24—Nov. 22). Not a good day for coming to a decision. A good day for not coming to a decision.

Sagittarius (Nov. 23—Dec. 22). Really, you simply cannot wear those trousers with that coat. Go back and change now.

Capricorn (Dec. 23—Jan. 20). You must make up your mind whether you believe all this rot and act resolutely in support of your decision.

Now for Kim's Game

By R. G. G. PRICE

MISS URSULA EASON, the Assistant Head of Programmes on Children's Television, was recently speaking "mollifying" words to Librarians and, according to *The Times*, "soothing" them without exactly converting them. The whole tone of the report is peculiar, though not inexplicable from what I remember of Miss Eason in childhood. I knew, more or less, several smallish girls who later made the grade in tough capacities; I knew them, I should explain, more by propinquity than as the result of planned pursuit. And I tended not to know them for very long. I think I met Miss Diana Fishwick, the golf virtuoso, only twice. The first time she took a small cake away from me. The second she gave me a roller-skate lesson, but desisted when she found me slow at the rudiments. I also have an early memory of that intrepid navigator, Mrs. Ann Davison. Aged about eleven, she was wearing heavy make-up and trying to hold a party of middle-aged ladies

enthralled by her conversation about the servant problem.

I knew Miss Eason longer, though not, I think, very intensively. (I was a dim child and apt to ask other children whether I knew them or not.) Once at a party in her exuberant family home I won the booby-prize, and it was, of all prizes to give a booby, a kind of solid intelligence-test, consisting of a lot of little notched rods that you had to fit together. The end-product was a tetrahedron, or perhaps it may have been a Japanese house. I cannot quite remember. I left bits of this humiliating toy strewn about at the party and, being a very polite family, my hosts were always calling on me with additional pieces that had come to light. I never did collect all of it, and this enabled me to claim that the really essential piece was missing and that, provided with this, I should soon progress beyond a bundle of separate sticks.

I won a good many booby-prizes at parties. In my youth there was a craze

for progressive games, in which you had not only to pick up peas with knitting-needles but move anti-clockwise in public. These games needed so much more than the ability to play them. You had to remember for a whole evening whether you were odd or even, and you also needed a good memory for faces. You had to be able to say on arriving at the wrong table "I have fought you before." You even had to carry a score-card and do sums at the end. Just occasionally I reached a table at which my performance was not despicable; usually dice were involved. I once beat a future Clerk to the House of Commons at "Snakes and Ladders."

So far they seem to have kept progressive games off television, though I do not check the Children's Programmes consistently, and Miss Eason may have sneaked some in. In the adult, or after high-tea, games the panelists stay put, though possibly over the years there is some viscous movement between panels. Except in quizzes the score does not



seem to follow the scorers from week to week. In those far-off days there was no television to entertain children, and even to-day if you turned it on at the beginning of a Christmas party it would probably only teach your guests how to choose fish.

One of the most horrible methods of entertaining was to play the kind of games that much younger children played but to play them more roughly. At toddler level "Nuts and May" still has about it some of the Elizabethan charm of its name. Played by children who were well out of the lowest form of their first real school it became like battle-training in the Chicago police. "Oranges and Lemons," despite its pretty tinklings and strongly ecclesiastical flavour, ended with the players using their arms like guillotines.

Most families provided a Jolly Aunt, though sometimes a Jolly Business Colleague of the host's father was the best they could rise to. The Jolly Aunt saw herself either as a filler of fluted cardboard with pink jelly or as a pianist, and pianists always opened with "Sir Roger de Coverley." This cissy dance

did not, in the circles I was allowed to accept invitations in, end in violence; but it had one odd effect on me. I heard so much about how the charm of the dance was a mere nothing to the charm of Addison's *de Coverley Papers* in *The Spectator* that I kept off them all my childhood. As I went up the school there was a tendency for forms parallel with mine to be doing them, not without Notes and Exercises. I felt that I was having a lucky miss. By the time I reached Oxford they were a bit beneath me.

I have read a good deal of *The Spectator*, dutifully preferring Steele to Addison—is there a pro-Budget faction?—but I have always felt driven to o'erleap any mention of that sweet old squire and his merry pals. I have probably lost a good deal by this, including any hope of being taken for a well-read man. However, I shall probably meet them in later life. There will be a copy in the small library of the Old People's Home. Or perhaps I shall land back in teaching and my quavering voice will be heard—"Question Three: Name four of Will Wimble's whims."

Schools, of course, have become increasingly practical. Children no longer learn history in the way that we did; they make models of aspects of history suitable for being inexpensively modelled. This is probably why modern children's parties are so much less active than the ones you read about. Seventy years ago children's parties, all rosy-cheeked, were always rushing to cook toffee or present their own version of *Valentine and Orsen* or haymake.

Now that they do this kind of thing in school, a party that aims at being different from daily life will either be much quieter than parties in the last century or much more violent. They will involve either reclining on cushions and looking at the home cinema or dancing fierce dances until sufficiently roused to go after the neighbours with coshes.

During the Christmas holidays the B.B.C. ought to run a series of Late Children's Hours. When the party got out of hand the hosts could turn the TV on their guests, and there would be Miss Eason mollifying them.



"Pieces of eight! Pieces of eight!"

Doctors' Commons

By RICHARD GORDON

If you have half an hour to spare catching a train from Euston you might pass it wandering round the British Medical Association Headquarters. This is a pleasant red-brick building originally designed as a temple for the Theosophists, which stands midway between the Royal Free Hospital and the National Union of Railwaymen on the locomotive edge of Bloomsbury. As the B.M.A. has over sixty thousand members, anyone looking sufficiently respectable can not only stroll round but will be politely addressed by all the staff as "Doctor." Never protest that you are Mister—you'll only be taken for a surgeon standing on his dignity.

The gateway is narrow enough to scrape the wings of a consultant's car, and beyond is a sheltered donnish court-yard, a bar and a library, and a sunken garden where the Greek Medical Association a few years ago planted an olive shoot from the Hippocratic Island of Cos, which has withered with Anglo-Greek relations since. There's also a club-room with a rich air of leathery gloom, deepened by animal heads sent from sporty East African doctors and including an amiable-looking buffalo said to resemble a former Secretary, Dr. Charles Hill.

You won't find a stethoscope or a scalpel in the place. B.M.A. medicine is wholly non-clinical, and when occasionally a waitress twists an ankle or one of the secretaries faints there's a rush to telephone the hospital to send a doctor. This attitude possibly accounts for the widespread mystery of what the B.M.A. is for.

The B.M.A. has so many irons in the sacred flame of medicine that it's difficult to say what it *does* do. It certainly isn't a disciplinary force like the General Medical Council. If the B.M.A. chucks you out you not only go on practising merrily but you save six guineas a year on the sub. Ministers of Health sometimes call it, after dinner, "The Doctors' Parliament," but it isn't their only representative body—there's the Medical Practitioners' Union which goes to the T.U.C., and the Socialist Medical Association bursting with ideals and Dr. Edith Summerskill. It isn't the official voice of British medicine, though it employs a charming chap as P.R.O.

(unqualified). It isn't a trade union by modern standards, because it always puts the interests of the public before those of its members.

The B.M.A. acts as an employment agency for out-of-work doctors and a house agency for foreign ones, it gives prizes to promising medical students, and it sends and receives the currently fashionable overseas delegations. Its provincial branches arrange meetings which seem to exercise fully the interests of British doctors, the list from a recent *British Medical Journal* including successively "Warts," "Drink and the Driver," and "An Alcoholic Excursion Through the Ages." Above all, it organizes committees.

The B.M.A. is crawling with committees, ready to give advice on anything from abortion to zymotic diseases to anyone from a Royal Commission to the Boy Scouts. This is most beneficial to the profession. A doctor would outrage his busy partner by popping down to London for the day with dinner and a show afterwards, but if he looks into the sub-committee on Microscopical Ethics everyone's happy and he gets the relaxation that puts off his coronary thrombosis. Better still, once a year he can enjoy the sea air he so badly needs by raising his voice in the Annual Conference on either the scandal of the mortality of tuberculosis or the scandal of the low mileage allowances.

This yearly relief of the schizophrenia which strikes every British doctor when he starts thinking of both the clinical and financial sides of his work is the biggest balm of the B.M.A. Medicine in Britain is still conducted on the laughable assumption that you practise to save humanity and to occupy your afternoons, and British G.P.s naturally feel chary of queueing up with the unions for more cash. But the B.M.A. can put in a pay claim like a bishop on a good cause. It has only to talk to the Minister of Health about professional remuneration with the touch of dignified distaste suggesting an unpleasant disease discovered among his relatives, and before you can say "Danckwerts" there's Mr. Turton wondering how the devil to get out of it.

Although the B.M.A. doesn't always get the money, it does its members a power of good by giving them a chance to let off steam. Doctors are lonely men. Under professional rules they can't even talk about their work to their friends. Just think what their wives would have to put up with were it not for the B.M.A.

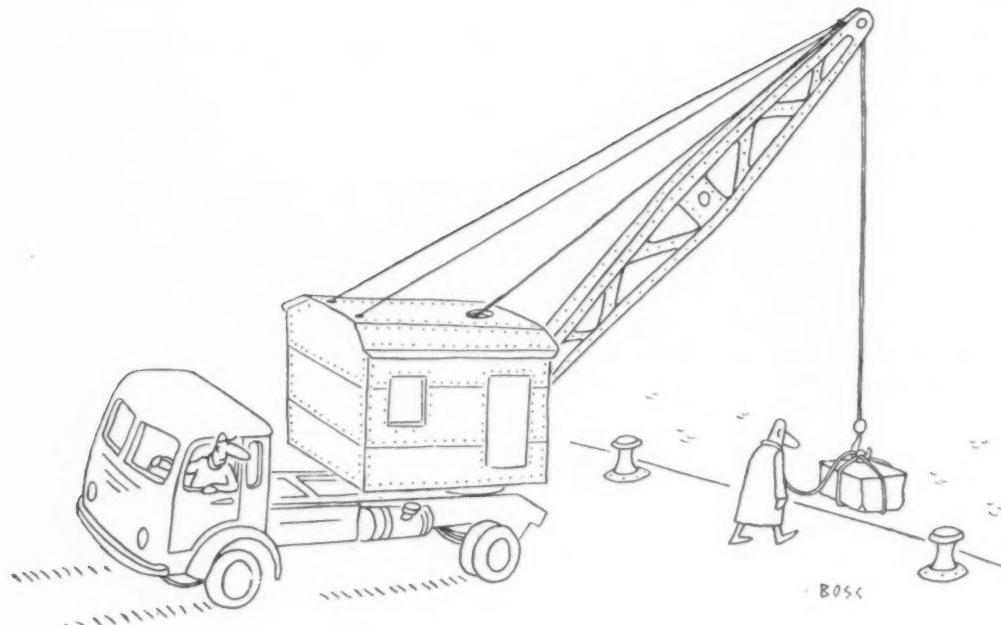


"Audrey Hepburn, whose elfin loveliness will be seen in Paramount's forthcoming *Funny Face*, says: '—Toilet Soap leaves my skin fresh, clear and lovely.'"

From an Advertisement

. . . And funny?





Going Hunt-Balling?

By DANIEL PETTIWARD

YOU would be amazed at some of the questions I get asked by non-hunting men—often well-educated, superior sort of fellows, what I call "tailor-mades"—about what is and is not *de rigueur* at Hunt Balls. These have ranged from a business-like "I presume I would be well-advised to wear an old suit in case I am singled out for blooding" to a tremulous "Will my Leander socks be pink enough?"

Perhaps these are extreme examples, but many of the less extraordinary inquiries show an equal ignorance of the subject and fall into the common error of imagining a Hunt Ball to be something entirely different from every other kind of ball, an almost Eleusinian ritual presided over by horse-faced women and old-world men in garish red costumes alternately blowing horns and uttering savage yelps and belonging to an exclusive coterie which bitterly resents the intrusion of non-hunting personnel.

I need hardly say that this is utter clap-trap. There are always plenty of

women at Hunt Balls—often a predominance of them—who are not horse-faced, and there is invariably a fair sprinkling of black-coated men-revellers including actual non-horsemen—dress-designers, Readers in Economics and so on who are week-ending at near-by castles, and probably a few complete outsiders as well, cycle accessory stockists and the like who have perhaps been included at the last minute in saddle-makers' and horse-meat-purveyors' parties. Provided these people abide by certain unwritten rules, then so far from their being resented they are likely to be more than welcome for the money they bring in. After all, as the Hunt Committee would be the first to admit, there is nothing more acceptable than hard cash to the devotees of this strange compelling cult whose Holy of Holies is the stable-yard. As for the yelping and horn-blowing, naturally this breaks out occasionally among groups of high-spirited middle-aged people, but there are usually plenty of moments when it is possible, for those who so desire, to hear the band and get

a very good general idea of what is being played.

A question I am often asked which seems to get a number of people unnecessarily fussed is "What do I do if I meet the Master or the Huntsman?" Well, let us take one at a time, beginning with the Master. Heavens alive, man! What do you think you do? Jump out of the window? Kneel down and kiss the fellow's spurs? He's only a human being like the rest of us, possibly not even quite that, and he would be the last to expect preferential treatment at a social gathering where the emphasis is heavily on informality. If he addresses you, just reply in simple everyday phrases, spiced if you can manage it with a dash of pre-war slang, and if he appears to be trying to borrow money, just create a diversion by putting your elbow in an ash-tray or staging some other seemingly natural "accident." Unless you have carefully checked your man's history in advance, do not of course say anything at all technical to him about hunting.

Good-humoured insults spoken in a

lightly patronizing tone—these chaps expect it—should be the order of the day when addressing hunt servants who will probably be collecting tickets at the door and therefore difficult to avoid. A phrase like "Got you workin' as a ruddy usherette again, have they, Albert!" (Yes, they really do drop those Gs) would be hard to beat. (If, as I have been assuming, you are likely to be a member of a non-subscribing party, then your best course on coming into the orbit of Hunt servants would be to nuzzle up behind a knot of knowledgeable-looking Hunt-ballers and listen carefully to what Christian names are being used and to any particular topics—a fresh outbreak of foot-rot at the rectory perhaps, or a recap of Wednesday's four-mile point, six and half miles as hounds ran after a Blue Leghorn—which are being singled out for special mention. Don't be misled if you should happen to hear anything on the lines of "Doggies all gone to bye-byes, Charlie?" This is a privileged line of patter not to be attempted until you have reached immense seniority—practically Duke of Beaufort level—in hunting circles.)

Apart from the usual rush of inquiries from keen bicycle followers who want to know if they are entitled to wear Hunt coats at their friends' weddings I receive innumerable queries about every single item of male Hunt Ball-wear from front studs downwards. My invariable answer to all such questions is that fashions vary slightly from shire to shire and even from century to century, but if you wish to look absolutely right in black and white keep your ensemble pre-1935 in feeling and remember that any departure from a dark-red carnation such as an eau de nil water-lily flecked with puce, though it may call forth exclamations of rapture from a certain type of lady guest, can evoke nothing but horror in the eyes of anyone who really matters. The main thing is to look at all times as if you have brought a large party over from County Tyrone and are feverishly discussing the season's prospects with Chiffon, Lady Barrack-heaver.

"To what extent will it be considered bad form," a young estate agent demands, "to do an eightsome right through without faltering?" A fascinating point this, striking right at the heart not only of our present problem but of our whole complex social

organism. There are so many ifs and buts, but speaking broadly I would say that, provided he is not in any way graceful or in strict tempo and does not admit to knowing the names of any figures other than figures of eight, an Englishman may safely go right through an eightsome reel without any more serious fluffing than a slight touch of hysteria in the grand chains.

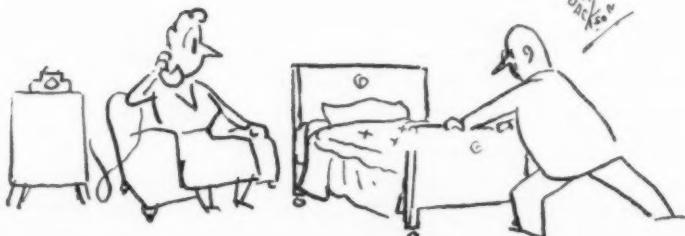
For all non-reels, though, adhere rigidly to the old Russian Tumbler shuffle, holding the partner at arm's length and neighing frequently; and don't of course admit to knowing the tunes or words of any songs (except possibly one or two from *Salad Days* or *No, No Nanette!* according to age-group). Don't ever sing, apart from an

occasional strangled cry of "Swing, Swing Together" or "I Can't Afford a Carriage," and don't shout "Hi! Frankie boy, keep right on digging!" to the band leader (he won't hear and it's probably his deputy anyway). Don't for goodness' sake know how to pronounce or distinguish between rumbas, sambas and mambos, and don't forget that being able to do even one tango step is quite unforgivable. Finally, never dance with strange men, unless of course you are a woman or it's a tremendously successful ball of the kind where you have a distinct feeling afterwards that at one stage you rendered passages from *Le Spectre de la Rose* with the Master of the East Lewisham Basset Hounds.



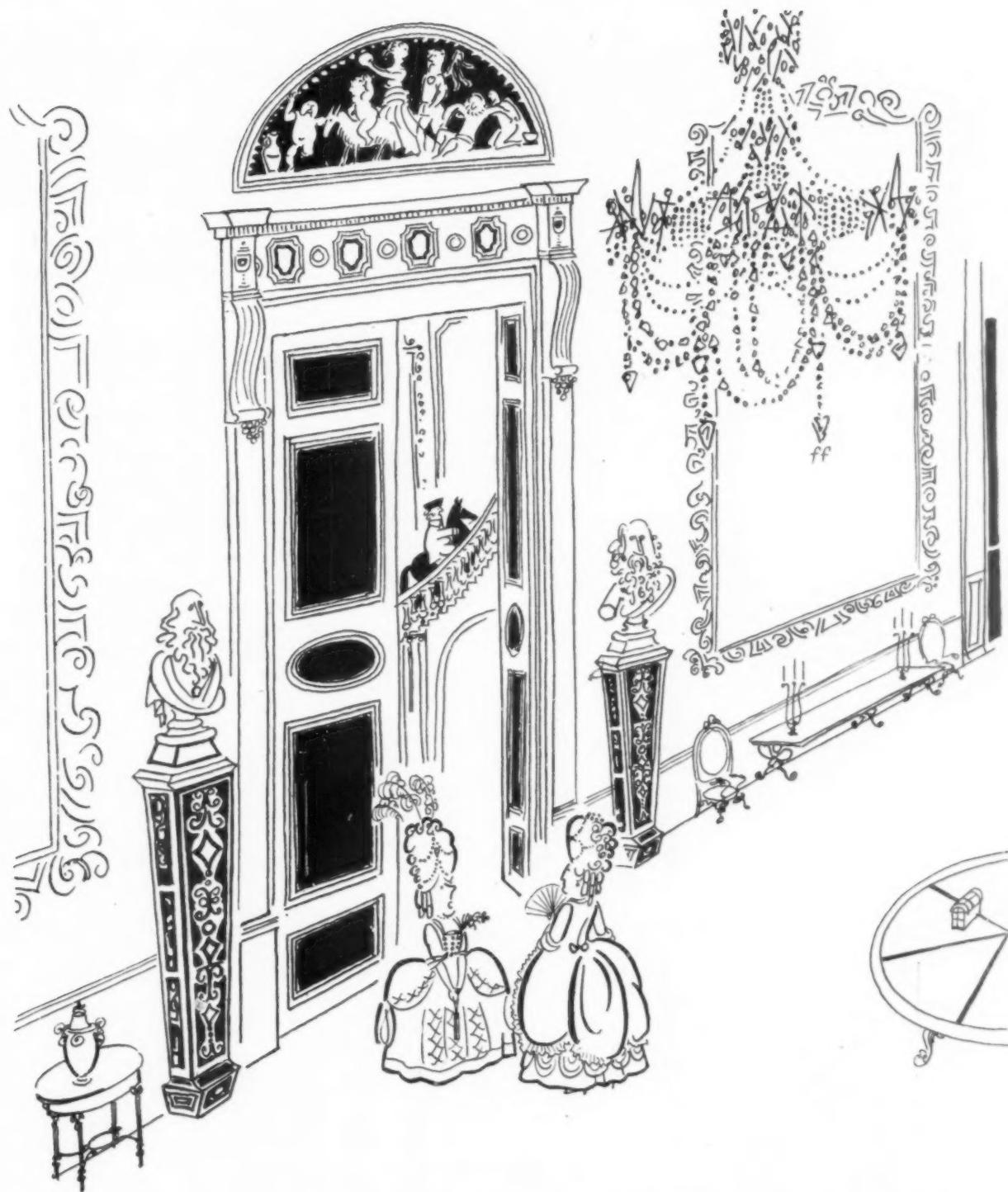
"She's just beginning to notice boys."

Astraea Redux



WITH nicely calculated less or more
 Come then and let us reckon up the score.
 The master object was to interpose
 Our troops between the two conflicting foes.
 The conflict closed, what purpose to remain?
 He came, he saw, he went away again.
 Had there been no Emergency, of course
 The Emergency could not have had a Force,
 And so 'tis shown, defying all negations,
 We've greatly strengthened the United Nations.
 Britannia, as before, still rules the waves
 And now may salvage what no more she saves.
 Nasser, that frantic creature of an hour,
 Has fallen (except technically) from power,
 And British subjects offer grateful thanks
 For their protection from Egyptian tanks.
 Peace, thanks to Hare and Head, appears assured.
 The Eastern oil supplies have been secured.
 Our Moslem allies in the Bagdad Pact
 Showed unalloyed delight when we attacked.
 The Russians, smarting from their sore defeat,
 Have run and scuttled back in quick retreat.
 The bonds of Commonwealth now hold so firm
 A thousand years will scarcely see their term.
 Americans no longer find it funny
 If they are asked to lend us lots more money,
 And Western Europe blinks to find it true—
 In rapture cries "All this, and Eden, too."
 Can any page of history disclose
 A list of triumphs parallel to those?
 No wonder that the Party, dumb with praise,
 Is only split in twenty-seven ways.
 If all these miracles he can achieve
 By simply going off on three weeks' leave,
 If everything is now so crisp and clear
 Solely by dint of Eden's not being here,
 And all the world is now as right as rain,
 Well then, dear, "Will ye no' go back again?"—
 Leave the gross detail to the lesser fry
 And, like Tiberius, reign from Goldeneye.

CHRISTOPHER HOLLIS



"I always know when my husband's been drinking."

John Daniel and Percy F.

By TOM GIRTIN

I WAS lying in bed in my room at the top of the tall Victorian house munching an apple and reading the latest Percy F. Westerman when I heard sounds of commotion downstairs. My father abruptly stopped playing the *Well-Tempered Clavier*. There was the sound of something falling over and breaking, an ill-tempered cry from my father, and a curious scampering noise. Then I heard my godmother's voice apologizing cheerfully. My godmother was always up to something new: wax baths or homeopathy or the rhythm of earth-borne water. Once it was spiritualism, and at an impromptu seance she had actually produced J. S. Bach with a message for my father.

"How is your aunt's cold?" J. S. Bach had inquired courteously. So when I heard my godmother I relaxed

—the scampering sound probably indicated Dalcroze Eurhythms—and returned to Percy F. Westerman. Unlike my godmother you knew where you were with Percy F. His sense of values was solid and unchanging. In his swift-moving yarns of adventure, on or below the waves, on desert islands or even in dirigibles, to be a clean-living British sportsman was the ideal. Even if you were a blood-boltered pirate captain you were not immune from this virus:

"A slight flush of pleasure suffused Captain Cain's tanned and weather-beaten features. For the second time that morning he had been paid the highest tribute a man can secure—the compliment of being called a sportsman."

He had managed to inculcate this spirit into his pirate crew, for when one of

their number was knocked out in eight rounds of fair fight by one of the captured chums they cheered like anything:

"Tough, desperate characters they might be, but they were sportsmen—members of a race that produces the best winners and the best losers in the world."

Of course every now and again this sporting spirit could prove a bit of a handicap. For example, when the chums were plotting to overthrow their captor:

"Rex, you've forgotten one incident that makes this intended coup de main impossible!"

"What was that?"
"We shook hands with him."
"Oh!"

But this was something you had to put up with in a code where Race and Breeding were all-important:

"I never had much use for mongrels," said the pirate.

"If it comes to that," countered Kayburn, "is there a more mongrel nation than the British? Saxon, Kelt, Dane, Norman and half a dozen other strains, and the result holds its own with any other nation on the face of the earth."

"Granted," acquiesced Cain, "but all the races you name originate from districts north of the 45th parallel and, as a rule, the farther north the better the strain."

Southerners were, in fact, absolute poison to Percy F. and to all us right-thinking chaps. The way they behaved was insupportable.

"A British crew in similar circumstances would have closed round their guns and fought it out. But the Chileans—members of a Latin race mingled with Indian blood—had not the nerve and pluck to fight."

Percy F.'s sense of the dialect talked by these lesser breeds was refreshingly uncomplicated; foreigners put the verb at the end of the sentence.

"Pigs!" howled the Greek skipper. "Ver' much money alla gone! Oo you? Vere you froma come?"

"To-morrow," said the Japanese doctor, sibilantly, "in advance of your honourable departure I another visit will bestow."

"So!" exclaimed the German seaman gutturally. "How you mein name know?"



"I hate circuses."

But there was one overwhelming advantage in being British. Wherever you might find yourself—whether you were captured by a Soviet submarine or borne aloft in a dirigible owned by a South American Republic in a state of revolution—the British Flag protected you.

"You vait! Poot 'em oop!" snarls some Latin, producing a wicked-looking automatic.

"What is the meaning of this," demanded Captain Bullock, sternly. "Don't you know this is a British ship? The British Government will know how to deal with the perpetrators of this outrage!"

And "Blighters!" exclaimed the third officer in agreement. For me, lying there with an apple in my hand and Percy F. Westerman propped up against my knees, there was a great sense of security as well as of pride still to be felt in being British.

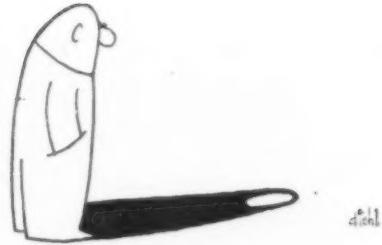
The sounds from downstairs—except for a curious, high chattering noise which was followed by my godmother's merry Mabel Lucie Attwell laugh—had died away. My hair starting on my scalp I was back on "Mystery Island."

"An instant later," I read, "a fearful apparition emerged from the pit. Whether man or ape there was little time to conjecture. Deep-set eyes, flat nose and a large mouth displaying a double row of yellow jagged teeth gave the creature an expression at once cunning and ferocious. With a hideous cry more like a croak than a growl . . ."

At this moment the handle of my door turned noisily and an instant later a fearful apparition entered. It had, as I was quick to observe, deep-set eyes, flat nose and a large mouth displaying yellow jagged teeth. The hideous cry more like a croak than a growl was, however, mine as I lay petrified in a state of what Percy F. would have readily diagnosed as "blue funk."

"John Daniel!" cried my godmother from below. "Where are you? What are you up to? John Daniel?"

The creature showed signs of recognizing the voice of authority and with what was clearly intended as an ingratiating, man to man, conspiratorial smile it hopped up on to my bed and put one hairy arm affectionately around the gooseflesh of my neck. It lay there



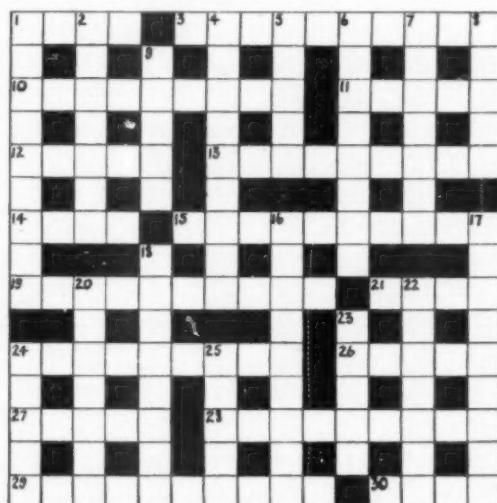
quite quietly. With its disengaged arm it beat its chest gently; then almost absentmindedly it beat mine.

John Daniel turned out to be the latest of my godmother's enthusiasms. She had gone into a Kensington department store to buy some lace and had come out with a young gorilla. John Daniel was beautifully behaved and became a frequent and welcome evening visitor at our house.

Many were the cosy sessions we had together with Percy F. Westerman. And when, as often happened, John Daniel snatched my apple from me before I was half-way through it I was able to employ the most frightful oath in the whole of Percy F.'s vocabulary: "Confound it!" I exclaimed. "Ten thousand thunders!"

Crossword—The Twelve Days of Christmas

WELL, honestly! The things that boy dredged up for Christmas! A **1 dn.** (9) for a start, not dressed but straight from the wood with **1 ac.** (4) sauce ingredients. Quite the feathered-friend-loving type, my true love: some of his other acceptable adjuncts to a girl's aviary were **9 dn.** (5) **2 dn.** (7)—I'll need some more **20 dn.** (7); **30 ac.** (4) a-swimming—I'm not sure of their sex yet; turtle doves, but no **17 dn.** (9) and

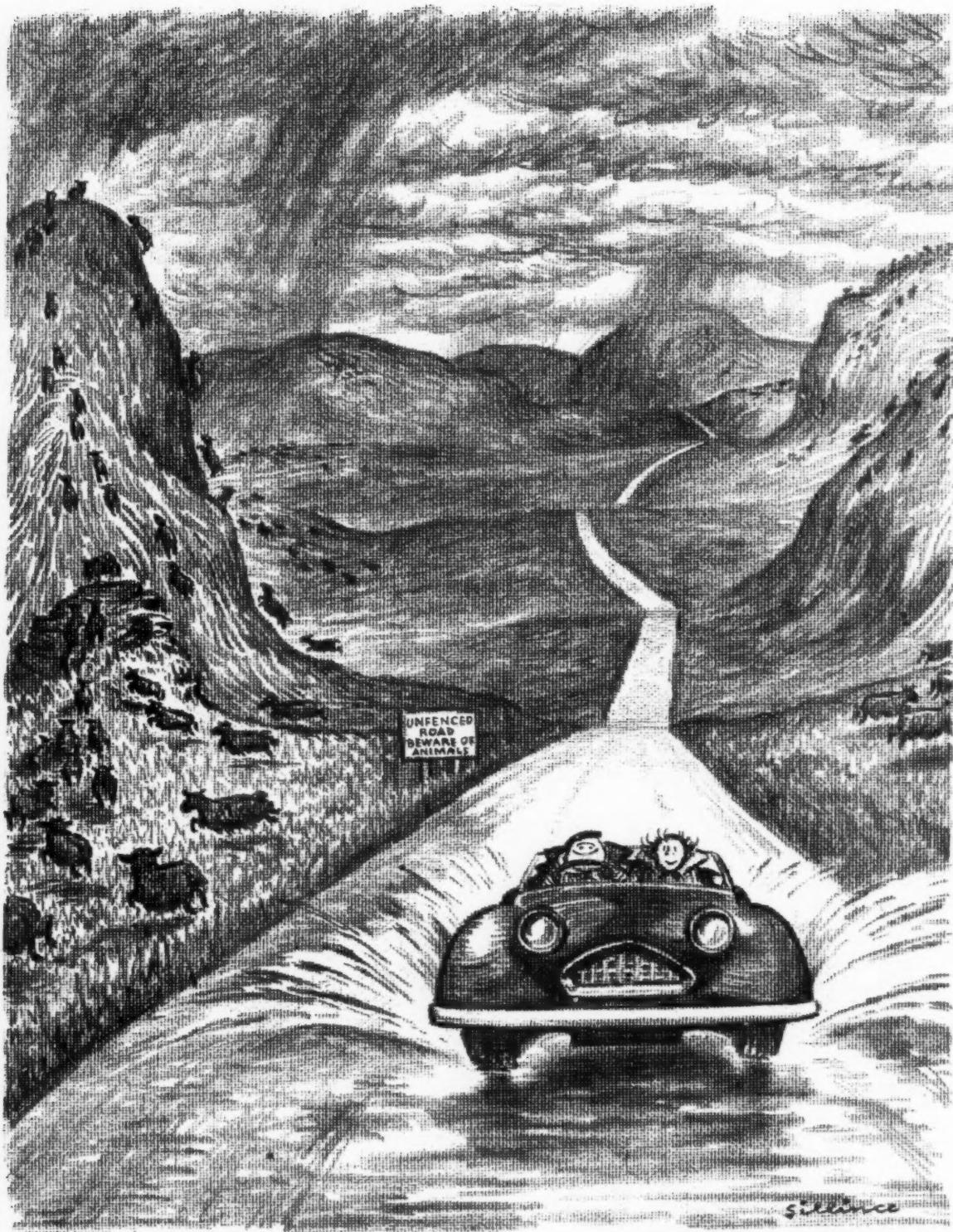


Solution next week.

I can't keep them in the **26 ac.** (5); French hens—**4 dn.** (9) probably, they're *très soignées* and I hope I've **6 dn.** (8) that properly; and colly birds, whatever they are, coots, maybe, or some other **15 ac.** (10) species. Handy, isn't it, for a girl living in **14 ac.** (4)? No wonder my landlady's temper is in **12 ac.** (5). If this is love's young dream give me a **24 ac.** (9) But that's not all. Another little frill for the Christmas stocking was twelve lords a-leaping. They came in a horse-box with a **13 ac.** (9) to help them get airborne. Poor dears, drooling away night after night about capital punishment and so on. I don't suppose they've ever been **19 ac.** (10) so vigorously since they were Hons.

Mind you, my true love's not mean. This gift-from-the-stud scheme must have cost the earth. He's **3 ac.** (10) enough. I can see him falling for any **21 ac.** (4) muttering "Pst! Want five gold rings?" A bit mad, perhaps not quite like Hamlet, only when the wind's in the **28 ac.** (5, 4). And romantic! His little **27 ac.** (5), that's his **22 dn.** (3, 4) for me.

But to get back to the presents. As a matching set for the twelve lords a-leaping came eleven ladies dancing. I thought of pairing them off, but dim as I am at **23 dn.** (5) I can see that leaves an odd peer out. I wonder if the same radio **16 dn.** (5, 4) will do for the dancing and leaping? There are other partnership problems. He also landed me with eight maids a-milking—that means buying them a **11 ac.** (5)—and they can't date up evenly with either the nine drummers drumming—they **7 dn.** (7) the drumskins like Drake before he went west—or the ten pipers piping; those are **18 dn.** (8) presumably. This is the end! The **5 dn.** (5) of my fortunes, or rather **29 ac.** (10)! I wouldn't put it past me, after I've **8 dn.** (5) to-night, to commit **25 dn.** (5) and get rid of the lot. There shall the fire devour thee, as the prophet **24 dn.** (5) says. And that's my candid opinion of what my true love, as I **10 ac.** (9) eleven times in the song, gave to me.





Plateau or Volcano?

IT has been generally and generously conceded by the economists that Mr. Macmillan was wise to step up the petrol tax. The cut in oil supplies—to something like seventy per cent of normal requirements—had threatened to rob him of about £6 million a month in revenue, but the additional shilling a gallon should keep his books straight and mop up the potentially inflationary £30 millions between now and the end of the financial year.

Having idled through the above paragraph readers of this column will divide very evenly, I think, into two camps. The first will agree that the tax is disinflationary, realistic and necessary; the second will raise its eyebrows and ask how a new levy on transport, the costs of which are included in the price of everything we buy, can possibly be regarded as anything but inflationary. I see their points.

It cannot be denied that petrol rationing at the old price would have left more money in the hands of the public and that part of this money would have been diverted to other sections of the home market. This would have meant increased demand for consumer goods and another slight twist to the inflationary spiral. Immediately it became known that rationing was inevitable, orders for new domestic luxury goods to be bought on hire purchase terms began to roll in. The Browns talked the situation over, calculated that rationing would involve them in involuntary saving of about ten shillings a week (three gallons) and decided to blue the sum on the telly. And to the extent that the cosy plans of the Browns were frustrated by the additional tax it is obvious that the Chancellor's move was deflationary or, rather, disinflationary.

Nor can it be denied that the new tax will raise the general level of prices. It has been estimated that the increase of 1s. 5d. per gallon (1s. tax and 5d. to petrol dealers) will push up the cost of living by about one per cent, which is rather less than the pessimists had feared, but a figure reflecting fairly

accurately the immediate real cost to the economy of dislocation at the oil pump.

It is a nice holiday task, I suggest, to work out the full economic implications of the two lines of action—first, leaving the tax at its old level, and second, popping it up to 3s. 6d. a gallon;

Your deliberations should take note of the factor that according to economic theory any induced tax can increase the cost of living only by the amount of the tax gathered. In my view this theory ignores the "multiplier" element in the tax mechanism. Any really sharp increase in tax has a profound influence on the community's propensities to consume and to save. In certain circumstances heavy new taxation can shock people into a mood of retrenchment and

caution out of all proportion to the size of the levy, so that the economy rapidly loses impetus and eventually stagnates. This happened in many countries during the early 'thirties, and recovery was then brought about only by copious injections of rearmament business. In other circumstances heavy taxation can produce disillusionment, panic and irresponsibility. Further punitive raids on the purse are anticipated, buying becomes feverish, and margins everywhere are pushed up to take advantage of the spree.

What happens now? Will the celebrated Macmillan plateau be planed down to new contour lines? Or will it erupt with volcanic activity? Your guess is as good as the economists'.

MAMMON



Farmer's Burden

"YOU must either give up farming altogether," said the doctor who had examined a neighbour of mine, "or, alternatively, you could sell your own farm and take a job on somebody else's."

This was sound advice. It sounds a paradox only to those who know little of present agricultural conditions. The doctor's diagnosis was that his patient was suffering from acute physical exhaustion, which only prolonged rest would put right. These symptoms are not unusual among yeoman farmers; the cure is to become a labourer.

The average owner-farmer has a hundred acres and employs one or two men. The farmer himself generally works a fourteen-hour day; the men he employs, no more than eight. In the privileged position of owner, the farmer works a seven-day week; for him there is no overtime or holiday with pay. And whereas the labourer goes off at the end of the day without a worry, the farmer has to burden his evenings with figures, and to spoil his sleep conjuring with overdrafts. But of course all the profits belong to the farmer? True, if there are any. On the average holding these amount to about £400 a year;

whereas the labourer usually pockets £450. To get his profit the farmer risks all his capital; on a hundred-acre farm this may be as much as £10,000. I have seen several dairy farmers who bought their land just after the war work themselves into the ground. Their widows inherit the farm: it is sold by auction and realizes about half what their husbands paid for it. I suppose it is worth noticing that the two words "to own" and "to owe" derive from the same stem.

It is a similar picture for the women: the farmer's wife has to tend the calves and the chickens; contributing her bit in the yard, she lacks any help in the kitchen: at its best her round can only be described as voluntary drudgery. On the other hand the labourer's lady can lounge around in her cottage and fill in the day with a yawn.

Of course there is nothing in the least surprising in these relative conditions. This is the age of fair shares for all—excluding you. And is consistent with the contemporary pattern which gives maximum security to those with the least responsibility. But now that this dubious Equality has been achieved, shouldn't someone rewrite the ballad "To Be a Farmer's Boy," adapting the old tempo to suitable overtime?

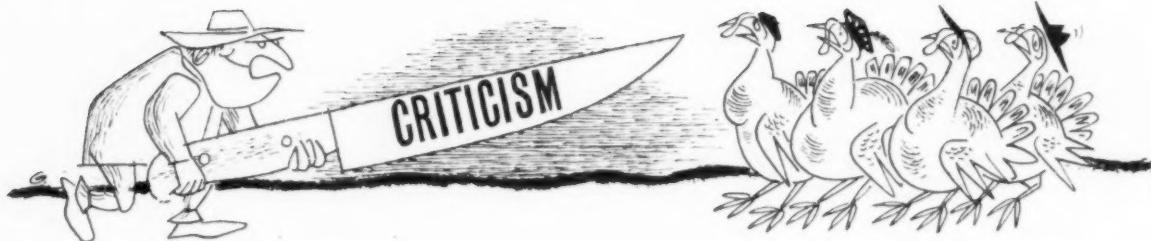
RONALD DUNCAN

• •

"Following a reception held at the Cranborne House Hotel, the couple left by air for their honeymoon in Cornwall and Wales, the bridegroom travelling in a lime green suit with mushroom accessories."

Darlington and Stockton Times

And the bride in some embarrassment?



BOOKING OFFICE

On the Record

An Anthology of English Prose, 1400-1900.
Edited by Eirian James. Cambridge University Press, 12 6

THIS book has a special importance in my experience as a reviewer, since it arrived accompanied by six gramophone records. I suppose that in the future this will happen with increasing frequency; and that in due course the gramophone record only will appear, having displaced entirely the printed word. In the end a new edition of *A La Recherche du Temps Perdu* or *War and Peace* will be issued merely as a single long-playing disc, to be started and stopped by some simple mechanical adjustment.

There are sixty extracts in this volume, beginning with Malory's *Morte d'Arthur* and ending with Samuel Butler's *Way of All Flesh*. To each of these pieces Miss Eirian James appends (at the back of the book) a short informative commentary. The aim is educational and the British Council supply the records. The hole in the centre of the ones I received seemed unusually small, and I found some difficulty in playing them without enlarging it with a penknife; but I am prepared to admit that this may have been the fault of my own gramophone.

Miss James has obviously done her job well. I should like to have seen Surtees included, but recognize that space must have imposed certain limitations. One is delighted to find John Aubrey's name here, as he is so often omitted from such selections; but it was a pity to choose a passage from the *Brief Lives* almost entirely rearranged by a later hand, when it would have been perfectly possible to have used something of similar length written consecutively by Aubrey himself.

However, these are minor criticisms. More serious is the doubt that arises in the mind regarding the whole question of anthologies and "selections"; a doubt that is by no means set at rest by listening to the records. These are

read, so we are informed, by "senior members of the University of Cambridge under the direction of Miss James."

It would be wholly unjust to suggest that the passages are badly read. In a sense they are exceedingly well read, but read in a manner that seems to me thoroughly unsympathetic. If a book is read aloud, I want to think about the book, not about the reader; and on the whole the readers of the records I



received (Bacon, the Bible, Traherne, Bunyan, Gibbon, Burke, Hazlitt, Coleridge, the Brontës, George Eliot and Thomas Hardy) seemed to me to ham it much too much. Most of them—the reader of Ecclesiastes was an honourable exception—sounded as if they were qualifying for R.A.D.A., especially the lady who undertook the Brontës.

Now I hasten to add that many people prefer this kind of reading, and, as a senior member of the University of Cambridge, if you are told to read a famous passage from English literature it is natural enough to put everything you've got into your tone. However, this only emphasizes the whole menace of the selected purple patch. It encourages people to think of English literature as something you cut up into snippets to get through examinations;

in order, eventually, to teach other people to do the same.

The blurb of this book uses the ghastly phrase "proficiency in English," as if reading books was something like driving a car or totting up accounts. If this selection persuades anyone to enjoy some of the authors whose works are reproduced it will, of course, have done some good; but if it is merely a means of getting past as a "proficient" student of English one cannot feel very much enthusiasm about it.

The point seems to me to be this: There is no possible connection between a bit of *Urn Burial* and a bit of *Alice in Wonderland*. For my own part, I like them both, but beyond the fact that both are written in English, and in prose, and both possess an originality all their own, I can see little or no reason for detaching these and a number of other pieces from the whole to which they belong and serving them up cut into equal lengths. The worst of it is that in the end you begin to feel that all English writers from 1400 to 1900 did write the same sort of thing. Malory is finally streamlined into Meredith.

However, these are the unseasonable thoughts of a literary Scrooge (or perhaps rather Marley, with a lot of review copies chained to his leg), and such reviewers who are rich enough to give Christmas parties, or popular enough to be asked to them, will be able to enhance their position by producing their records of great English writers and playing them in an atmosphere of paper hats and snap-dragon.

ANTHONY POWELL

Army Life

Red Over Green. Robert Henriques. Collins, 13 6

Barry, alias "Buffer," a thirty-five-year-old solicitor, was flabbily unfit morally and physically at the outbreak of war: mean sensual man personified, vacillating hopelessly between love for his beautiful ailing wife Rosamond and "chemical" passion for the enchantingly affected Kate—who, revolting against the boorishness of his initial behaviour,

proceeds to put him through it for the rest of the book.

This is the tale of his regeneration through service in a Commando Troop whose officers are almost all recruited among Kate's past and present suitors—including the forcefully unconventional Brigadier Hatherley-Cooke. Colonel Henriques is a practised story-teller who knows military life as few authors do; his style is idiosyncratic, elliptical, and swift-moving: spiced with a wry humour best exemplified by the devastating account of Barry's Christmas leave in company with a ginger-moustached major who afterwards becomes his C.O. Some readers, however, may be a trifle disconcerted at the reappearance of Mr. Evelyn Waugh's Brigadier Ritchie-Hook—black eye-patch and all—under the new designation of General Cornish-Raikes.

J. M.R.

The Life of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu. Robert Halsband. Oxford University Press, 30/-

While there was room for a new book about the witty, energetic and enterprising Lady Mary it should surely have been a work of style, proportion and moderate length. What we have actually been given is one of those massive biographical monuments the erection of which has become one of America's major heavy industries. The woman who has been kept so vividly alive by her own brilliant letters and the scurriilities of Pope has been interred beneath a mausoleum of unselected fact. It is not that Mr. Halsband's narrative lacks interest—Lady Mary herself sees to that—but he has pursued it with so conscientious a determination to omit not the most trivial detail, with so little variation of emphasis, and so rigorous an objectivity, that even had his manner of writing been less pedestrian and more nicely adjusted to his intention the portrait which emerges could hardly have been other than two-dimensional. Mr. Halsband's industry commands respect: its result induces the reflection that the reaction against Stracheyism may be carried too far.

F. B.

The Strangled Queen. Maurice Druon. Trans. Humphrey Hare. Hart-Davis, 15/-

This successor to *The Iron King*, in the series *The Accursed Kings*, continues the story of royal feuds and lusts in early fourteenth-century France. Philip the Fair has been followed by the dullard Louis X and the Court is divided into factions. The nobles, led by the King's uncles, seize back their privileges and bring about the downfall of the great minister Enguerrand de Marigny.

To Monsieur Druon the past is exciting but not attractive. Palaces and fortresses have cold walls, fear of hunger and the gibbet weighs on courtiers and peasants and all is dirty and cold; but he also includes what are often omitted by humanitarian historical novelists, the

relish of the game of power, the briskness of conflict and the solid satisfaction of acquiring gold and jewels and a glittering marriage for one's heir. He has often been compared with Dumas. He is a more accurate historian and he covers aspects of the past that Dumas ignored; but he has the same power of creating excitement from plots and bustle and shifts in the balance of power.

R. G. G. P.

The Brazen Head. John Cowper Powys. Macdonald, 18/-

Mr. Powys never writes one word where twenty or thirty can be made to do the work; but his spate of language is extraordinarily felicitous. The reader is borne along within the stream of imagery, dimly aware that remarkable and beautiful things are happening above his submerged head. The difficulty is to discover exactly what these beautiful events signify. *The Brazen Head* describes a supernatural conflict between Friar Bacon and the established powers of this world, based, it seems, on Avicenna's theory that each individual is endowed with numerous souls.

Evidently, from the names of the characters, the book is an allegory. That does not mean that it is easy to comprehend; when this reviewer at last understood that Sir Mort Abyssum did not after all denote physical death he abandoned the unequal struggle. Yet each incident is described with vivid rhetoric by a master of English prose. Those more skilful in the interpretation of nightmares will doubtless draw spiritual profit from this odd work.

A. L. D.

The Red Fort. James Leasor. Werner Laurie, 21/-

Only a hundred years ago the lethal range of warfare was so limited that officers investing a desperately-defended city could change into mess-kit every night and eat a six-course dinner. An admirable result of this localization was a tendency to spend the evenings writing long (and very well-composed) letters home or compiling diaries from which memoirs would be extracted later on.

Mr. Leasor has drawn on innumerable such accounts for his study of the siege of Delhi, that formed, as it were, the core of the Indian Mutiny; and his book is as sharply evocative as an album of photographs. If sometimes the plethora of facts has overwhelmed him and he has included some of them twice; if over-eagerness to paint his scene has betrayed



him here and there into a too-fictional manner, complete with invented dialogue, these are small blemishes beside his achievement in welding his material into a story no less exciting, and probably a good deal more accurate, than last week's dispatches from the Middle East.

B. A. Y.

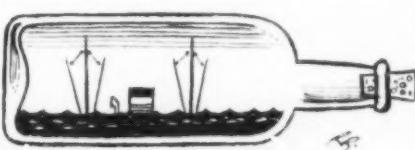
The Curious Past. Robin Attill. H'essx Press Taunton, 8/6

Mr. Robin Attill, West Country by birth and upbringing, though East Anglian by family origins, possessed an Attill ancestor who was a friend of Parson Woodforde, the diarist. His dozen studies in this entertaining little book all deal with Somerset and are mostly concerned with the hills of Mendip. We are shown the ruined lead mines, probably worked even before the Romans came, which form a subterranean kingdom in that region. This countryside is also rich in "unrestored" churches, Caroline and Georgian gems, that escaped the wrecking hand of the Tractarian Movement—and especially the Camden Society—whose efforts to reintroduce Catholic ritual to Anglican churches were in many ways as architecturally disastrous as the deliberate destruction of the Puritans. *The Curious Past* is recommended for its unusual bits of information to all interested in English County history.

A. P.

O Beulah Land. Mary Lee Settle. Heinemann, 18/-

Here is yet another account of the American crossing of the Alleghenies in the mid-eighteenth century, a very favourite subject for historical romance; some admirers of this accomplished writer will regret that in her third novel she has aimed at such an easy target. But she hits the bulls-eye squarely in the centre; here is everything we have been led to expect. 'The Indian point of view



is expounded with sympathy, in the modern manner; and the divisions among the white men carefully explained. The government in London wished to respect the Indian boundary; the planters on the Atlantic coast wanted peace, because war brought expensive regular soldiers. But poor immigrants wanted freehold farms, and casual ruffians stirred up strife by robbing the Indians of their furs. The Indians, when sufficiently provoked, raided so savagely that they had to be extirpated.

In a wide panorama Miss Settle shows all these factors in operation, and as the fruit of first-hand research among surviving documents makes her characters speak for themselves.

A. L. D.

Further Letters of Gerard Manley Hopkins. Edited by Claude Collee Abbott. O.U.P., 50/-

This volume of Hopkins' letters was first published in 1938. Now it appears with the addition of a considerable collection of letters written to his family. These family letters cover the period of Hopkins' conversion to Roman Catholicism while at Oxford—there is a stiffly embarrassed letter to his father and an agonized reply ("O Gerard my darling boy are you indeed gone from me?"). The most interesting correspondence in the book, however, is that with Coventry Patmore which covers the last six years of Hopkins' life. Patmore, who had his own original theories about pause and

stress in poetry, found Hopkins' innovations altogether too much for him. System and theory were manifest, he said, "but they seem to me to be *too* manifest . . . They often darken the thought and feeling which all arts and artifices of language should only illustrate." It is a telling criticism, and one that Hopkins must have felt deeply.

His own admiration did not preclude him from criticizing in overwhelming detail Patmore's Collected Poems. "Your careful and subtle fault-finding is the greatest praise my poetry has ever received," Patmore wrote a little hollowly, but he did not act on many of Hopkins' suggestions. Mr. Abbott's editing is a model of unobtrusive patience. J. S.



AT THE PLAY

Mrs. Gibbons' Boys
(WESTMINSTER)

A HUNDRED years ago the English home revolved round Pa, who claimed divine rights of hypocrisy, with alarming results. Now, as everyone knows, American life is hinged on Ma, which is less objectionable, though sometimes a little cloying. This unheeding mother-worship asks for satirical treatment in the theatre, and gets it briskly in *Mrs. Gibbons' Boys*, Windsor Theatre Royal's second contribution to the West End in under a month.

When the Americans laugh at themselves they do it with exemplary

thoroughness. Mrs. Gibbons is a widow, gentle and genteel, whose pride in her three sons splendidly survives their mounting criminal records. Her maternal blinkers are of the very finest workmanship. As other mothers in the lusher sections of New York might speak of the triumph of their sons at Harvard, so she is quietly confident that her two dear boys are the props and pillars of a slightly different educational institution in which, owing to a travesty of justice too absurd to be discussed, they are incarcerated. The third son is only a beginner, but shows promise; already he is on probation, a condition accepted by his adoring mother as normal in the career of any decent boy whose high spirits are bound to be misunderstood.

As the sentences of the older boys grow longer, Mrs. Gibbons grows lonelier, and her courtship by the chief cashier of the Gas Company, an upright mouse of a man, is coming along nicely. Mr. MacMichaels, who knows nothing of her family's activities, has just proposed and been accepted when the window bursts open and Rodla and Francis arrive, accompanied by a human gorilla waving a gun. They are still in prison clothes; Mrs. Gibbons' pleasure at their break from jail is dimmed only by distress that a garbage truck should have carried them to liberty. If they had just come back from Eton, bringing a distinguished friend for the holidays, the little home could not be happier.

Except for poor Mr. MacMichaels, fuming and impotent, now held a prisoner while the boys lie low. The authors, Will Glickman and Joseph Stein, show considerable invention. Mr. MacMichaels' integrity is made to suffer in a hundred ways. Mrs. Gibbons' flashy sister melts the gorilla into simple, almost touching, affection. In a whole series of ironic situations Mrs. Gibbons preserves her girlish innocence; for instance, the youngest son being on probation, and so allowed no intercourse with crime, he is banished to the sofa while his raffish interjections are formally conveyed to the breakfast table by his mother. When the local cop, sick to death of the Gibbons, is knocked out by her in a moment of maternal fury, we are ready for a noble demonstration of how mother worship can turn the sternest souls to jelly. "Aw, Ma, we wouldn't want to see you tossed in the can!" "Oh, Francis, I'll never forget those sweet



Francis X. Gibbons—LEE MONTAGUE

Mrs. Peggy Gibbons—AVICE LANDONE

(Mrs. Gibbons' Boys)

PUNCH INDEX

The indexes of PUNCH contributions are now issued separately. The latest, for July to December, 1956, may be obtained free on application to The Circulation Manager, PUNCH, 10 Bouvierie Street, London, E.C.4.

Readers who have their copies bound in the standard binding covers need not apply. The indexes are supplied with the covers.

words!" So a bargain is struck with the reviving cop, and the two boys go back meekly to finish their time, Mrs. Gibbons prouder than ever. And the signs are that she will soon, in spite of everything, be Mrs. MacMichaels.

This is a winning little play, that passes without effort from one lunacy to another, every now and then hitting us hard with an outrageously funny line. The production may not have quite the bite it would have on Broadway, but Hugh Goldie has done pretty well, and the comic vitality of the three jailbirds, Frederick Jaeger, Lee Montague and George Margo, is a delight. Mrs. Gibbons, triumphantly silly and rather lovable, finds glowing expression in Avice Landone, and Mary Kerridge plays her sister with a capable hip-consciousness. The gentlest of the fun depends mainly on the doomed cashier, played so well by Eric House that one longs to examine his tiny but galvanic processes under a microscope.

Recommended

(Dates in brackets refer to *Punch* reviews)

The Country Wife (Royal Court—5/12/56). Sex unafraid. *The Diary of Anne Frank* (Phoenix—5/12/56). Sensitive staged. *The Touch of Fear* (Aldwych—12/12/56) intelligent crime.

ERIC KEOWN



AT THE PICTURES

High Society—*Checkpoint*

I HAD been thinking that it was simply age that accounted for my not enjoying big lavish musicals as much as I used to enjoy them; but *High Society* (Director: Charles Walters) is strong evidence to suggest that the falling-off has been in the musicals and not in my powers of appreciation. This is one I seem to have enjoyed in the real old way, as if I were twenty years younger.

To be sure, it has the dazzling star team of Bing Crosby, Grace Kelly and Frank Sinatra (let's keep to the alphabetical order they use in the credits). These skilful and attractive people could no doubt carry something much weaker than the present piece built on the foundation of Philip Barry's play—which once made a good film with Katharine Hepburn—*The Philadelphia Story*; but one must be fair. The witty lines and the Cole Porter songs mean a great deal. The story itself, I would say, means remarkably little. Like the story in any musical, it is there to provide opportunities for particular performers to do their stuff. When the performers are as magnificently competent as these, the result can't miss.

The songs have been criticized as not up to the old Cole Porter standard; but they pleased me at the time. What is always satisfactory about a Cole Porter song is the sheer literary pleasure it can give. I don't say the words would read well as light verse; that's the point: the



Bill Fraser—ANTHONY STEEL

O'Donovan—STANLEY BAKER

emphasis of the tune is part of the effect. As set to their tunes, the words are calculated to make a special—and in this field almost unique—impression of wit.

The three stars take the three principal parts of the original: the heiress, the still loving ex-husband (Mr. Crosby) and the visiting reporter (Mr. Sinatra) who is there to cover her impending second marriage. To provide a spot for Louis Armstrong, the ex-husband is now a jazz enthusiast; but Mr. Armstrong is also made a sort of Greek chorus, telling us (as he looks roguishly into the eye of the camera) exactly where we are in the story. This sort of thing hardly goes with certain moments in which we seem to be actually expected to take the plot seriously . . . But nobody will mind. This is a really gay job, beautifully done.

What spoils *Checkpoint* (Director: Ralph Thomas) is the scramble to clear up all the loose ends of the story in time for the fade-out. Loose ends should, of course, be cleared up, and the subsequent fate of the characters should be suggested, unless there happens to be a special reason for leaving it uncertain; but "scramble" is not an unfair word for the way this is done here. It seems a final touch of absurdity that one important character, almost killed in an accident, should make a point of using his dying words to explain that the hero had nothing to do with anything illegal and acted from the best of motives . . .

The piece is about motor-racing, and the hero is a dashing driver named Bill (Anthony Steel) who believes that

"women are like cars—tricky as the devil and best driven fast." However, women are quite unimportant in the story: Odile Versois is charming as Bill's girl, but although there is an attempt to work up an emotional *impasse* (she wants peace of mind, he lives for the danger of racing) this is one point that is completely ignored at the end.

Most of the film concerns a particular race, the Mille Miglia from Florence, and for once in a picture about any kind of racing the point has nothing to do with who wins. The central situation is that for Bill's co-driver has been substituted a murderer (Stanley Baker) whom his boss wishes to smuggle out of the country, and the climax is a crash and a fight on a cliff. It's well-done brisk-action stuff, visually pleasing ("Dig that scenery floatin' ba!'" as Louis Armstrong sings in the other film) and, apart from that hasty ending, good.

* * * * *

Survey
(Dates in brackets refer to *Punch* reviews)

Studio One has a good Disney programme for Christmas: *Davy Crockett and the River Pirates* and an entertaining half-hour documentary (including cartoon sequences), *Man in Space*; but it's impossible to be sure, as I write, about most of the London shows. It may be that these are still about: *War and Peace* (28/11/56), *The Silent World* (12/12/56) and *Gervaise* (19/12/56).

The one new release to mention is *Guys and Dolls* (3/10/56).

RICHARD MALLETT



ON THE AIR

Crime and Punishment

I HAVE an uneasy feeling that I am about to change my mind about serials on television, and the incidental reason for my conversion may well be Michael Gilbert's thriller "The Crime of the Century." What this six-reeler is about I have no idea: there are crooks of course, British crooks with cultured accents, good tailors and quiet gentlemanly manners, there are detectives, infernal machines, mysterious offices, cigarettes in endless supply and hints of romance, but I am as baffled as the Yard in my attempts to identify good and evil, heroes and heroines, point and counter-point.

Unlike the detective novel the TV serial thriller is most exciting during its initial scene-setting, character-sketching and trail-laying sequences, and tends to lose its grip as the climax and the unmasking ceremony approach. To retain the viewer's interest for six weeks there must be no hint of a decision until the last round. There can be no question of a win on points, for neither the screen nor the viewer can memorize all the blows aimed and avoided in the lengthy tussle, and the knock-out when it eventually arrives is merely a technical and conventional device for signing-off. The count of ten is the serial playwrights' final bow and pretty little "thank-you-for-having-me" speech.

TV serials are not drama. They are concerned neither with plot nor character, and have no more shape and credible continuity than the snapshots in a photographic society's annual exhibition. But they can be entertaining.



(The Crime of the Century)

Major Trump—BALLARD BERKELEY; Mr. Brakewell—EDWARD CHAPMAN; Abbie—SIDNEY JAMES; Charlton Bradbury—WILLIAM LUCAS; Clare Pinnock—GENE ANDERSON

Michael Gilbert's serial, finely produced by Andrew Osborn, skips along at a tremendous pace—a pace that would be killing, I think, in any other medium and in any TV programme lasting more than half an hour. The story, if there is one, is told in short sharp bursts of action and tense dialogue as the scene switches, every minute or so, to another part of the forest of brick and mortar, and so rapid are the changes and exchanges that the benevolent viewer has no time to feel outraged by the assault on his senses.

In other hands this strip cartoon technique could produce appalling results but here the photography, camera work and design (by John Cooper) are extremely good and the pictures alone are well worth the viewer's time and expenditure of nervous energy.

William Lucas plays the part of Charlton Bradbury, a Gentleman Jim type (I think), with convincing toughness and suavity, and Edward Chapman steps

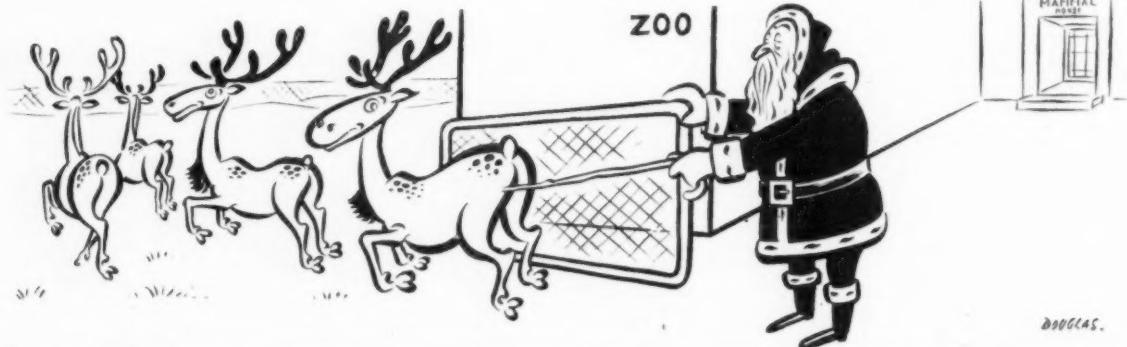
out of Galsworthy to convince us (unless I am very much mistaken) that Mr. Brakewell is a tired business man who has taken the wrong turning. They are supported by a first-rate team.

I hope that the B.B.C. will not be slow to realize that the translation of Twenty Questions to television has been a dreadful mistake. This ancient game has had a wonderful run for its money on steam radio, for the simple reason that it skirmishes briskly in words only and requires no visual props or mental imagery. It helps not at all to see Norman Hackforth in his dungeon, the questioners lined up on their perches, Gilbert Harding knowing some of the answers, or pictorial clues to the "next object." The presence of the

cameras and their vain attempts to focus on the open-mouthed speaker slow down the game to a limping trot, and in some strange way the utter futility of the proceedings is made more obvious and embarrassing by being mounted and framed. One of these days I intend to work out the number of tomfool questions asked in this programme over the years. The figure will stagger everybody except Mr. Winnick.

Finally, and for the record, let me praise an American "situation comedy." Some months ago, when I belaboured Lucy, Gracie and Joan, readers in America implored me to look at the "Burns and Allen Show" with a more discerning eye. I can now report that "Talent Scout" was the funniest thirty minutes of television I have experienced for a very long time. Taken in moderation—say once a month—Burns and Allen are delicious.

BERNARD HOLLOWOOD



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COMPANY MEETING

THE BRITISH MOTOR CORPORATION

CHANGED TRADING CONDITIONS—RESULTS FAR FROM UNSATISFACTORY

The Fifth Annual General Meeting of The British Motor Corporation, Ltd., was held on December 18 at Longbridge Works, Birmingham. Mr. G. W. Harriman, C.B.E., Deputy Chairman and Joint Managing Director, presided in the absence of Sir Leonard Lord, K.B.E.

Mr. Harriman addressing the meeting said "I am sure I can speak for everyone here today, if I say how much we miss Sir Leonard Lord. I am pleased indeed to tell you that he has been at one or other of our various factories every day, but he is not undertaking any public duties at present."

The following is an extract from the Chairman's statement which had been circulated with the report and accounts for the year to 31st July, 1956:

The conditions under which we have been conducting our business have changed radically during the past year.

I gave warning last year that this might happen. At that time the cloud on the horizon was "no bigger than a man's hand," but the hand in question proved to be that of the Chancellor. So the sky under which we work and seek a reasonable reward, has become overcast with restrictions of credit and hire purchase, and increases of purchase tax, all openly proclaimed as being designed to discourage our customers from purchasing our products and to re-deploy some of our labour force. Viewed against this somewhat sombre background our present results are far from disappointing.

PRODUCTION AND PRICES

Our production for the year was 439,558 vehicles. Of these 252,412 were for the Home market, and 187,146 were exported. In our previous financial year we produced 418,705 vehicles.

The effects of the credit squeeze began to be apparent in January. From then we had to reduce the rate of production, which in some factories meant short time. The most critical period began in March when the anti-inflationary policy squeezed the heart out of the Spring demand.

Up to that time we had been able to maintain the policy of price stabilization, but then came another National Wage award. On March 12, finding our position untenable, we increased Home prices by 7½ per cent. Export prices could not be increased because of growing price competition overseas. At some sacrifice of earnings this enabled us to maintain Export volume.

LABOUR FORCE

It is a tribute to the resilience of the Corporation's structure that we were able to continue until the end of June without any reduction of the labour force.

When we came at last to the difficult and regretful decision that redundancy was unavoidable the majority of the employees faced the situation with understanding and loyalty, for which I now wish to express gratitude. This redundancy was negotiated in every detail and at every stage on the recommendations of the Engineering Employers' Federation of which we are members. In spite of this, we suffered a short partial strike, the settlement of which was also negotiated on the recommendations of the Engineering Employers' Federation. Because these events took place at the year end, there was an unavoidable increase in our stock figure.

EXPORTS AND OVERSEAS ACTIVITIES

Progress in Export markets was also hindered by widespread credit and import restrictions. I can quote as examples New Zealand and Australia, which together account for 30 per cent of Austin and Nuffield post-war exports. In New Zealand, along with the rest of the industry, we suffered a one-third cut in import quotas for 1956. In Australia, successive reductions of quotas have reduced the value of our exports to this leading world market by 52½ per cent since March, 1955. Australia is also one of those countries where severe credit restrictions, plus a drastic increase in sales tax, have for the time being seriously affected the market.

Fortunately for us there is another side to the picture. Our factories at Victoria Park, Sydney, in which we have an investment of £5,000,000 in Plant and Buildings, have begun the manufacture of "B" type engines and transmission units. We have planned for an output of 1,000 cars a week in Australia, and as soon as the presses are installed for the production of body panels in the new Sydney factory of our subsidiary, Fisher & Ludlow, Limited, our locally produced vehicles will be almost 100 per cent Australian manufactured.

This of necessity means a reduction of B.M.C. exports to Australia, but you have my assurance that we are actively seeking new markets to replenish our Export volume. Some of these will undoubtedly involve assembly and a degree of manufacture with a limited amount of initial finance.

In South Africa the assembly plant is operating most efficiently. Output for the year was 3,053 units. South Africa is one of the few markets where there is an increase of import quotas for 1957.

To the U.S.A. and Canada we exported 22,756 cars, an increase of 22·7 per cent over the previous financial year. It is also worthy of record

that our cars secured over 56 per cent of the total registrations of British vehicles in the U.S.A. for the eight months to the end of last August. In May of this year I was very happy to receive from our Canadian Company the one hundred millionth dollar earned by our exports to that country.

SUCCESSFUL NEW MODELS

In the year under review we introduced two new models which have proved very successful. The first was the Austin "105," a high performance version of the popular A.90 with many desirable extra features including overdrive. The second was a light commercial vehicle of 15 cwt. capacity, known as the J.2 in the Morris range and A.152 in the Austin range. This model, of unit construction and with forward control, enjoyed instantaneous success and our production resources are straining their utmost to meet a very big home and overseas demand.

We have made very real progress during the year in the essential and vital responsibility of supplying Replacement Parts. Turnover has increased by 14 per cent compared with an increase of 8 per cent in the previous year. This has been achieved whilst we have been involved in the major operation of consolidating the entire Parts organization under a subsidiary, B.M.C. Service Ltd., in a new building at Cowley. With this centralization almost accomplished and with the factories maintaining the flow of parts, I am confident of our ability to meet all demands from anywhere in the world.

FURTHER DEVELOPMENTS PLANNED

The Directors' Report shows a capital expenditure for the year of £9,157,000 and a further commitment of £6,820,000. Even though for the time being we are prevented from making the fullest use of these improved production facilities, I have no doubt as to the wisdom of the policy of providing them.

Never in the past, viewed over a reasonable period, has our industry in general, or have we in particular, been wrong in pursuing a policy of expansion. All previous advances in productive capacity have been quickly justified. The world is still hungry for motor vehicles and what we are now spending can be considered as a premium necessary to insure the future.

DEMAND FOR SMALL CARS

We are leading the British motor industry and the Continent in the adoption of 2-pedal control on popular models. We have greatly improved the appeal of the small cars—the Morris Minor 1000 and the Austin A.35—by equipping them with larger engines of higher efficiency, which will enable them to surpass the performance of their Continental rivals.

The sports cars the new Austin Healey Hundred Six, and the popular M.G.A., are in the keenest demand and look like being once again Britain's biggest dollar earners.

The very successful small car called the Metropolitan which we produce for the American Motors Corporation, previously sold only in dollar territories, is to be released to world markets generally and we expect hereby to double its sales and production.

Another notable event was the opening in April of Haseley Manor, our new Training College, situated near Warwick. Over 500 executives, senior staff, foremen and leading apprentices, from all branches of the Corporation have already participated in preliminary courses, and we are optimistic that in this development we have the means of improving the calibre of all grades of the Staff and ensuring that there will be, for promotion from within our organization, the right type of executive ability to shoulder the responsibilities of the future.

THE OUTLOOK

Although at the moment there are signs in some markets of the restrictions easing and of demand becoming freer, and we have been able to restore the five-day working week in most of our factories, I do feel we must expect difficult conditions for another year or eighteen months. We are critically poised in the matter of prices and any further increase in the costs of materials or in wages would have a profound effect on our sales performance and future earnings.

Fortunately, we possess the ability and experience necessary to face these problems, and throughout our organization there is the energy and enthusiasm to challenge them and resolve them.

I will conclude by thanking on your behalf all our employees, whatever the job they do, or the responsibility they fulfil, and with them our Suppliers, the Distributors, their Dealers and their staffs, for unfailing support throughout a year of many problems.

The report and accounts were adopted and the proposed final dividend on the Ordinary shares of 8½ per cent making with the interim dividend a total for the year of 12½ per cent, was approved.

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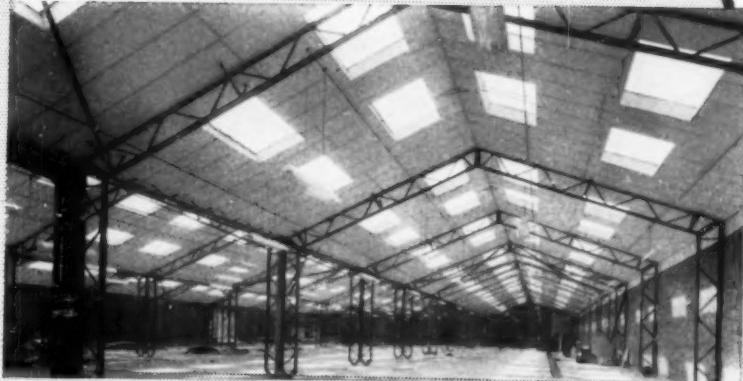


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Modernising your heating system?

—there are one or two facts of
which you should be aware



If you are considering changing to oil-firing for your central heating and hot water supply system you have broadly two alternative courses of action. One is to adapt your present boiler to burn oil; this involves the smaller initial outlay but your fuel costs will be 20 to 25 per cent higher than they need be for as long as you continue to use it this way.

The alternative is to take economy seriously into account from the start. This means installing a 'Potterton' Oil-Fired Boiler-Burner Unit. There may be a slight extra cost which is immediately recovered through lower fuel bills, and thereafter fuel is used in a quantity ratio of 4 to 5 as compared with the other way of having oil-firing. (You will have renewed your old boiler into the bargain).

The reason — oil fuel needs a combustion

chamber and secondary heating surfaces in the boiler of quite a different shape and size ratio from those for solid fuel. The 'Potterton' Oil-Fired Boiler-Burner Unit was designed as an oil-burning unit from the first line put on the drawing board to the proving of the finished job in day-to-day use before putting it on the market.

Please, at least, be aware of what is entailed. Go to a Heating Engineer you know and ask him. Ask the Company which supplies the oil, or write to us by all means if you prefer to. But be sure, one way or another, to get expert advice on your particular heating problems before you take any action.

PRICE STABILIZATION. Provided no major factors intervene, the price of De La Rue products will be stabilized until March 31st, 1957.

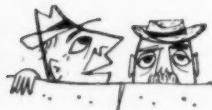


The 'Potterton' Oil-Fired Boiler-Burner Unit is at present available in sizes with outputs of 70,000 B.t.u. and upwards. It is the answer to your problem. It gives a sustained efficiency of 80% (near to the theoretical maximum).



the things they say!

Huge place, isn't it?



Darn sight too huge, if you ask me. These new I.C.I. places cost millions and millions — and what's it all for?

Why, surely to make new chemicals for Britain's expanding industries . . . ?

Not a bit of it — profits for a few top hats in the City, that's all it's for, mark my words. It isn't right that a few men should control such wealth and power, and if I were running this country . . .

Oh, come. You talk as though I.C.I. were controlled by a few financiers answerable to no one but themselves.



Well, isn't it?

Of course not. Nor is any big public company today.

Go on! I.C.I. is run by a handful of directors, and don't you say it isn't.

Certainly the big policy decisions in I.C.I. are made by the Directors. But nearly all of them are men who've come up through the organization, and none holds his position on the strength of a big block of shares or anything like that. Anyway, control of I.C.I. ultimately lies in the hands of the I.C.I. stockholders.

And who are they, eh?

A fair cross-section of the community — from foremen plasterers to district nurses, from shop assistants to judges. All told, no fewer than a quarter of a million people. The number is going up all the time, too, for under I.C.I.'s Profit-Sharing Scheme over 80,000 of its employees are also being given shares in the business.

